



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



James Lister.

Page 10



一、

二、

三、

四、

五、

六、

七、

八、

九、

十、

十一、

十二、

十三、

十四、

十五、

十六、

十七、

十八、

十八、

十九、

十九、

二十、

二十、

二十一、

二十一、

二十二、

二十二、

二十三、

二十三、

二十四、

二十四、

二十五、

二十五、

二十六、

二十六、

二十七、

二十七、

二十八、

二十八、

二十九、

二十九、

三十、



NCE



THE
BRITISH PROSE WRITER

VOL. XXV.

BEATTIE'S LETTERS.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE,
PICCADILLY.

1819—21.



BEATTIE'S LETTERS.

VOL. I.



LONDON, PUBLISHED BY JOHN SMITH, F. & CO. 1829

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

BEATTIE'S LETTERS.

I. TO DR. JOHN OGILVIE.*

Aberdeen, 20th August, 1759.

I HAD intended to have written a long letter on the occasion of my reading "Clarissa;" and I actually had begun one in a very methodical manner; but happening to read the postscript† afterwards, I was surprised to find the very subject touched upon there, which I had proposed to treat of in my intended letter. I, therefore, changed my first resolution, judging it unnecessary to trouble you with reading in my words what you find much better expressed in that postscript. I intended to have inquired into the conveniences and disadvantages of Richardson's manner of writing, compared with that of other novelists; to have considered the pro-

* The Reverend Dr. John Ogilvie, minister at Midmar, in Aberdeenshire, author of "Providence," and other poems. This letter was written when Dr. Beattie was in his twenty-fourth year.

† To "Clarissa," referred to in the preface of the work, in which several objections are considered by the author.

priety or impropriety of the catastrophe; and to have indulged what other critical reflections might have occurred upon the arrangement of the narrations, the length of the work, and a few other particulars. But finding this plan executed, as I said before, in the postscript, and executed in a manner very similar to that which I had designed, I shall trouble you at present only with a few miscellaneous observations upon that celebrated novel.

The author shows great knowledge of mankind, and of human nature. He possesses an inexhaustible fund of original sentiment, a happy talent at some kinds of description, particularly conversation pieces; he delineates some characters with masterly and distinguishing strokes; he seems to be well acquainted with the human heart, and with the particular emotions that arise in it on particular occasions. The fervour wherewith he recommends religion and virtue, intimates that he is truly in earnest, and that his heart goes along with his pen.

On reading "Clarissa," we immediately discover that its design is more to instruct than to amuse. The author warns the reader of this in his preface, and again repeats it in the postscript. It is for this reason, that they, who read more for amusement than instruction, will not be so much captivated with "Clarissa," as with some other of our English novels. I grant there are, in the novel before us, a great many passages of the most interesting kind, but these passages are few in comparison to the extent of the work. I cannot help thinking that our author is often tedious to a fault. *In the first volumes* there are, if I mistake not, man

needless (and I had almost said nauseating) repetitions. I grant, such letters as fall under this censure are generally characteristical, are often humorous, often instructive, and might possibly please, if we were to read the book a second or third time, when we are acquainted with all the characters, and all the particulars of the story. But as there are not many readers who can afford leisure to read so long a romance twice or thrice over, I presume proper care ought to have been taken to blend amusement and instruction in such a manner, as that the one might be a heightening and seasoning to the other. When a stop is put to the progress of the story, in order to give the author room to show his talent for humour, or for moralizing, the readers (especially those of the younger sort, for whom principally such books are intended) will be impatient till they disentangle themselves of these digressions, and fall in again with the story. This, I believe, will generally be the case, if the narrative be deeply interesting; and deeply interesting every narrative of this kind ought to be. One of the rules to be observed in the Aristotelean drama, is, that there be no scene in the piece superfluous. I wish the author of "*Clarissa*" had kept some such rule as this in his eye; that he had disposed all the parts of his work in such a manner, as that the reader, though always impatient for the catastrophe, should never be tempted to pass over any part, but should ever find the story rising upon him, so as that his passion for novelty should be fully gratified all along. For my own part, I was often chagrined at his tediousness, and frequently was obliged to turn to the contents of the volume, to relieve my mind a

jealousness is a pardonable
is so laudable.

With respect to the characters
they are, I think, in general
enough. There is something
characters of the three brothers
same time, something peculiar
thing may be observed, upon
of the characters that are alike.
The character of Lovelace is
with great art. In the first
something amiable enough
what he thinks almost sufficient
tions of Clarissa; nor does
designing ruffian, till the time
consistent are Lovelace's de-
that character which he be-
that the reader is not disan-

selves after the most perfect models, even although it be morally impossible for them ever to attain the perfection of these models? Does not the celebrated judge of the sublime very strongly recommend this rule, when he proposes for the imitation of those who would attempt epic poetry and oratory, no less perfect patterns than Homer and Demosthenes? Nay, (if we may, without profanation, use this other illustration,) does not the Scripture enjoin us to imitate the great Original of all perfection? This rule is founded in nature and reason. If the model be imperfect, the copies must of consequence be more imperfect; and so liable to error is the human mind, that we are as prone to imitate the faults as the excellences of what is proposed for an original to us. Now, shall this rule be allowed to every other science, and not to the most important of all sciences—the science of life and manners? I know the grand objection is, that, to give a man or woman a perfect character, is out of nature. A character absolutely perfect, does not, we acknowledge, belong to man.

But what height of excellence even a human soul may arrive at, we cannot ascertain, till we have left no experiment untried. One who had never seen the tricks of a wire-dancer, would be apt to ridicule as fabulous the first accounts he should hear of those astonishing feats, of which long application and unwearied industry make these performers capable. Who can tell what happy, what glorious effects might be produced, were an equal proportion of industry applied to the regulation of the passions, and the strengthening and improving *the reasonable powers*! Let not then the

novelist be censured, if his hero or heroine be possessed of a proportion of virtue superior to what we have discovered in our acquaintance with mankind; provided the natural genius inherent in the hero or heroine, assisted by the improvements of the happiest education, be sufficient to render their virtues at least probable. Nature, we must remember, had endowed Clarissa with a genius of the most exalted kind, and a temperament of soul formed to receive the impressions of virtue. This genius, and this disposition, improved by the culture of a liberal and strictly virtuous education, amid the simplicity of a country life, could not fail to produce an admirable character. Nor do I think this character (all circumstances considered) stretched beyond the limits of humanity. Clarissa's external conduct was, indeed, unblameable, (and I hope, for the honour of mankind, there are many to be found whose external conduct is unblameable,) but she often acknowledges her heart was not so. She owns, she was conceited and puffed up in her happy days, and not entirely proof against the suggestions of chagrin and despondency in her adversity. If then, her character be perfect, we must call it (as we before called it) *humanly* perfect.

On the whole, I think Mr. Richardson is, with regard to the manners of his heroine, entirely unworthy of blame.

You ask, What I think of Richardson's talents for the pathetic? In this respect, I think he has no equals among his own tribe of writers, and not many superiors even among the most celebrated tragedians. I said before, that he seems to be *acquainted with the particular emotions that arise in*

the human heart on particular occasions. Several passages of his work I could point out in proof of this: I shall only at present give one instance, and that is, Clarissa's delirious letter to Lovelace, which no person can read without sensible emotion. The starts of phrensy—of phrensy in such a person, under such circumstances, are, I think, hit off in such a manner, as would not have been unworthy of Shakspeare himself. I shall transcribe a few lines from that letter, with which I cannot tell how much I was struck. "But good, now, Lovelace, don't set Mrs. Sinclair upon me again. I never did her any harm. She so affrights me when I see her. Ever since—*When was it?* I cannot tell. You can, I suppose." This (*When was it?*) suggests a great deal to my imagination. It is one of those soul-harrowing expressions which are seldom to be met with but in Shakspeare, and which are infinitely preferable to all the laboured harangues and verbose descriptions of a Dryden. I must add, that the full beauty of that phrase cannot be taken in but by one who is well acquainted with this part of the story. The descriptions of the arrest, and of Clarissa's death, are very pathetic: and the author shows, by his account of the infamous Sinclair's fate, that he has no mean talent at describing scenes of horror. There is something dreadfully striking in the penknife scene, as it is called: but, as it is needless to be more particular, I cannot dismiss this criticism, without taking notice, that, however pathetic the account of the lady's misfortunes may be, *sorrow* will not, I think, be the prevailing passion in one who peruses it. If I mistake.

not, *indignation* at the infernal villany of the ruffian who is the author of these misfortunes, will not a little contribute to steel the heart against the softer impressions of sorrow; at least, will render them less penetrating. And yet, perhaps, either of these passions may be prevalent, according to the constitution of the reader.

Richardson, I think, merits commendation for his carefully avoiding to hint the least anticipation of the catastrophe in the first volumes. The reader is left as much in the dark, with respect to event as the interested persons themselves. This naturally results from the manner of writing which our author has chosen, and is, no doubt, one of the principal excellences of his manner, compared with that of other novelists: but this matter is handled in the postscript to the work.

I shall have done with my criticism on "*Clarissa*." To point out faults is a disagreeable task; I choose rather to insist upon beauties. Richardson, upon the whole, is an original writer; and deserves well of his country, for giving it one of the most useful novels in the English language.

After allowing this writer so large a share of merit, perhaps it may be thought too trifling to censure his style. It is, indeed, sometimes very expressive. To have raised it above the familiar had been faulty. He has often coined words, which in a literary correspondence, is allowable. He varies his style with great judgment, and adapts admirably to the different characters. If I were to find fault with it at all, I would only say, that, from an over-affectation of the familiar, he too ofte

uses the parenthesis ; and, as he seldom unites the latter part of the period with the former, by a *recapitulating word* or two, he lays his reader under the necessity, especially where the parenthesis is long, of reading the sentence once and again, before he can catch the meaning and intent of the whole. I think the parenthesis ought to be used very sparingly ; and, when an author chooses to use it, he should condescend so far to the weakness of his reader's memory, as to unite the disjointed parts of the period by a few recapitulating words, as I venture to call them, prefixed to the latter clause.

I was surprised to find, at the end of such a work as the "History of Clarissa," a set of verses so very paltry as those inscribed to the author of "Clarissa." But, I believe, authors are on such occasions often at a loss, and find themselves obliged to prefer, not the quality of the complimentary verses, but the quality of the friendly rhymers themselves ; otherwise I should venture to pronounce Mr. Richardson an inadequate judge of poetical merit. Take the following four lines, and tell me if you have ever seen more prosaic doggerel :

" With streaming eyes, too late, the mother blames
Her tame submission to the tyrant, James :
Ev'n he, the gloomy father, o'er the hearse
Laments his rashness, and recalls his curse."

II. TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.*

Aberdeen, 24th October, 1761.

I AM just now employed in reading the first volume of the "Nouvelle Eloise." The author seems to possess great knowledge of the human heart: his reflections, in general, are beautiful, original, and just; his sensibility exquisite, and his eloquence wonderfully affecting. But, though I grant him these excellences, I must be pardoned, when I censure either his judgment or his virtue. If he meant to promote the cause of virtue, it was certainly a proof of an egregious failure in his judgment, that he made choice of a fable whose tendency seems directly contrary. Vanbrugh, and Congreve, and Rochester, only inflame the imagination; Rousseau poisons the principles, and misleads the understanding: the former is a momentary evil, the other is permanent. And as a harlot, when she assumes the garb, the features, and the language of virtue, is much more dangerous than when she speaks her own words, and wears her proper dress; so I think the "Nouvelle Eloise" a much more dangerous book than all the ribaldry printed in the reign of Charles the Second

* Secretary to the board of trustees for fisheries and manufactories at Edinburgh.

III. TO ROBERT AREUTHNOT, ESQ.*

Aberdeen, 29th March, 1762.

I HAVE now read Fingal; but I am at a loss to know whether I should give you my opinion of it or not. My humble tribute of praise (were I disposed to praise it) would be lost amidst that universal deluge of approbation poured upon it, both from the critics of London and of Scotland; and were I inclined to censure it, my suffrage would be as little regarded as the loitering javelin which palsied Priam threw against the heaven-tempered shield of Pyrrhus—*telum imbelle sine ictu*. The particular beauties of this wonderful work are irresistibly striking, and I flatter myself that I am as sensible of them as another. But to that part of its merit which exalts it, considered as a whole, above the Iliad or Æneid, and its author above Homer or Virgil, I am insensible. Yet I understand, that of critics, not a few aver Ossian to have been a greater genius than either of these poets. Yet a little while, and, I doubt not, the world will be of a different opinion. Homer was as much admired about three months ago—I speak not of the present moment, for Ossian just now is all in all—I say, Homer was lately admired as much as he was three thousand years ago. Will the admiration of our Highland bard be as permanent? And will it be as universal as learning itself?

Knowledge of the human heart is a science of

* This letter was written at the period when "Ossian's Poems" first appeared.

the highest dignity. It is recommended, not only by its own importance, but also by this, that none but an exalted genius is capable of it. To delineate the objects of the material world requires a fine imagination, but to penetrate into the mental system, and to describe its different objects, with all their distinguishing (though sometimes almost imperceptible) peculiarities, requires an imagination far more extensive and vigorous. It is this kind of imagination which appears so conspicuous in the works of Shakspeare and Homer, and which, in my opinion, raises them above all other poets whatsoever; I mean not only that talent by which they can adapt themselves to the heart of their readers, and excite whatever affection they please in which the former plainly stands unrivalled; mean, also, that wonderfully penetrating and plastic faculty, which is capable of representing every species of character, not, as our ordinary poets do by a high shoulder, a wry mouth, or gigantic stature, but by hitting off, with a delicate hand, the distinguishing feature, and that in such a manner as makes it easily known from all others whatsoever however similar to a superficial eye. Hotspur and Henry V. are heroes resembling one another, yet very distinct in their characters; Falstaff, and Pistol, and Bardolph, are buffoons, but each in his own way; Desdemona and Juliet are not the same Bottom, and Dogberry, and the grave-diggers, are different characters: and the same may be said of the most similar of Homer's characters; each has some mark that makes him essentially different from the rest. But these great masters are no *more eminent in distinguishing, than in completin*

their characters. I am little acquainted with a Cato, a Sempronius, a Tinsel, a sir Charles Easy, &c. but I am perfectly acquainted with Achilles, Hector, Falstaff, Lear, Pistol, and Quickly; I know them more thoroughly than any other persons of my acquaintance.

If this accurate delineation of character be allowed the highest species of poetry, (and this, I think, is generally allowed) may I not ask, whether Ossian is not extremely defective in the *highest* species of poetry? It is said, indeed, that this poet lived in an age when mankind, being in a state of almost total barbarism, were incapable of that diversity of character which is found in countries improved by commerce and learning, and that, therefore, he had no materials for a diversity of character. But it is certain, that diversities of character are found among the rudest savages; and it is the poet's business, not to portray the characters as they really exist, (which is left to the historian) but to represent them such as they *might have* existed. But, to have done, Ossian seems really to have very little knowledge of the human heart; his chief talent lies in describing inanimate objects, and therefore he belongs, (according to my principles) not to the highest, but to an inferior order of poets.

IV. TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.*

Aberdeen, 28th December, 17

***** PRAY what is like to be the fate of "Grotesquiad?" It is natural for a father to be concerned about his offspring, though it be serious. I shall leave it to you to do with that part as you think proper. I think you said that Pitt translated the "Pigmies" of Addison.

You will perhaps remember, that in March I wrote a letter to you, containing some strictures on the "Poems of Ossian," then newly published. The remark which I made on that occasion was, that the poetry of that old bard, however exquisite in its kind, was not the highest in dignity, that, therefore, its author could have no title to be ranked above Milton, or Homer, or Shakspeare, who have all made a distinguished figure in the highest species of poetry. This was a subject which I often had occasion to expatiate in conversation, while the rage of extolling the Highland bard continued. It was then that I formed a design of throwing together some thoughts, by way of an essay, on the comparative dignity of the several kinds of poetry; a subject which, so far as I know, has never been treated in a philosophical manner by any critic, ancient or modern. As I applied my thoughts more seriously to this inquiry, I found my plan enlarge itself to a very considerable extent. I have, however, reduced it to something of the

* This letter contains Dr. Beattie's first hint of "*Essay on Poetry*."

and find that it will naturally consist of three parts. The first part contains a philosophical inquiry into the nature of poetry in general, considered as an imitation of nature, by means of language. In the second part, I propose to consider the principles which determine the degrees of our approbation in the imitative arts, particularly poetry. In the third part, I intend to consider the several kinds of poetry, with a view to these principles, and to determine their comparative excellence according to the degrees of approbation which they naturally command. The first part, which is finished, made a discourse of an hour and a half, which I read to a philosophical society, composed of some of our literati, who were very well pleased with it, and seemed to think that I had made several new observations, and set some points of criticism in a new light. The discussion of the second and third parts I intend to attempt during the summer vacation.

V. TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 12th December, 1763.

SINCE you left us, I have been reading Tasso's "Jerusalem," in the translation lately published by Hoole. I was not a little anxious to peruse a poem which is so famous over all Europe, and has so often been mentioned as a rival to the "Iliad," "Æneid," and "Paradise Lost." It is certainly a noble work; and though it seems to me to be inferior to the three poems just mentioned, yet I cannot help thinking it in the rank next to these. As for the other modern attempts at the "Epopée," the "Henriade" of Voltaire, the "Epigoniad" of Wilkie, the "Le-

onidas" of Glover, not to mention the "Arthur" of Blackmore, they are not to be compared with it. Tasso possesses an exuberant and sublime imagination, though in exuberance it seems, in my opinion, inferior to our Speuser, and in sublimity inferior to Milton. Were I to compare Milton's genius with Tasso's, I would say, that the sublime of the latter is flashy and fluctuating, while that of the former diffuses an uniform, steady, and vigorous blaze: Milton is more majestic, Tasso more dazzling. Dryden, it seems, was of opinion, that the "Jerusalem Delivered" was the only poem of modern times that deserved the name of epic: but it is certain that criticism was not this writer's talent; and I think it is evident, from some passages of his works, that he either did not, or would not, understand the "Paradise Lost." Tasso borrows his plot and principal characters from Homer, but his manner resembles Virgil's. He is certainly much obliged to Virgil, and scruples not to imitate nor to translate him on many occasions. In the *pathetic* he is far inferior both to Homer, to Virgil, and to Milton. His characters, though different, are not always distinct, and want those masterly and distinguishing strokes which the genius of Homer and Shakspeare, and of them only, knows how to delineate. Tasso excels in describing pleasurable scenes, and seems peculiarly fond of such as have a reference to the passion of love: yet, in characterizing this passion, he is far inferior, not only to Milton, but also to Virgil, whose *fourth book* he has been at great pains to imitate. The translation is smooth and flowing, but in dignity and variety of numbers is often defective; and often labours under a feebleness and

prolixity of phrase, evidently proceeding either from want of skill, or from want of leisure in the versifier.

VI. TO MR. GRAY.*

Marischal College of Aberdeen, 30th August, 1765.

IF I thought it necessary to offer an apology for venturing to address you in this abrupt manner, I should be very much at a loss how to begin. I might plead my admiration of your genius, and my attachment to your character; but who is he, that could not, with truth, urge the same excuse for intruding upon your retirement? I might plead my earnest desire to be personally acquainted with a man whom I have so long and so passionately admired in his writings; but thousands, of greater consequence than I, are ambitious of the same honour. I, indeed, must either flatter myself that no apology is necessary, or otherwise I must despair of obtaining what has long been the object of my most ardent wishes; I must for ever forfeit all hopes of seeing you and conversing with you.

It was yesterday I received the agreeable news of your being in Scotland, and of your intending to visit some parts of it. Will you permit us to hope, that we shall have an opportunity, at Aberdeen, of thanking you in person for the honour you have done to Britain, and to the poetic art, by your

* In the autumn of 1765, Mr. Gray, the poet, went to Scotland, on a visit to the late earl of Strathmore, at Glamis castle; and Dr. Beattie, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Gray, addressed to him the following letter.

inestimable compositions, and of offering you all that we have that deserves your acceptance, namely, hearts full of esteem, respect, and affection? If you cannot come so far northward, let me at least be acquainted with the place of your residence, and permitted to wait on you. Forgive, sir, this request; forgive me if I urge it with earnestness, for indeed it concerns me nearly; and do me the justice to believe, that I am, with the most sincere attachment, and most respectful esteem, &c. &c. &c.

P. S. Dr. Carlyle of Musselburgh, and Dr. Wight of Glasgow, acquainted me of your being in Scotland. It was from them I learned that my name was not wholly unknown to you.

VII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.*

Aberdeen, 7th December, 1765.

THE receipt of your very obliging letter ought to have been sooner acknowledged. I should abhor myself, had my delay been owing to indolence: possessed as I am with a most grateful sense of your favours, with the highest regard for your friendship, and the most zealous attachment to your character: my delay was indeed owing to another cause.

I have been employed for some time past in writing a kind of poetical epistle to Mr. Blacklock, in return for a present which he was so kind as to make me of his works, accompanied with a very handsome copy of verses; and I had intended to

* The author of the Life of Dr. Beattie.

send under the same cover my letter to you, and my verses to Mr. Blacklock. The verses are indeed finished; but as there are some passages in them which seem to need correction, I must, for some time, let them lie by me; for I have found by experience, that I am a much more impartial judge of such of my works as I have almost quite forgotten, than of such as are fresh in my memory. The epistle, when ready, will be sent to Dr. Gregory's care, and he will show it to you and to Mr. Arbuthnot as soon as it comes to hand.

I hope you will pardon me, if I cannot return such an answer to your letter as it deserves. I want words to express how much I value your friendship. Allow me to assure you, that I am not one of the ungrateful, nor (if good intentions can confer any merit on a character) one of the undeserving. The friendship of the good is the object of my highest ambition: if I cannot lay claim to it, I shall at least approve myself not entirely unworthy of it. Let me be tried by my conduct; and if I shall ever give a good man reason to be ashamed of owning me for his friend, then let my name be despised to the latest posterity.

I intend, if possible, to publish this winter a new edition of all my original pieces of poetry. I wrote to Mr. Arbuthnot some time ago, to treat with a bookseller, but have received no answer, which disappoints me a good deal, as the season is fast advancing, and as it will soon be too late to apply to another, in case the person to whom he promised to apply should decline my offer. Pray, will you advise me to insert the verses on Churchill in the collection? I do not think them the worst part of

my works, and therefore should be sorry to lose them altogether. My scheme, at present, is to strike out the name of Churchill, and insert a fictitious one. But in this I would wish to be directed by my friends.

I am sorry you did not see Mr. Gray on his return; you would have been much pleased with him. Setting aside his merit as a poet, which, however, in my opinion, is greater than any of his contemporaries can boast, in this or in any other nation, I found him possessed of the most exact taste, the soundest judgment, and the most extensive learning. He is happy in a singular facility of expression. His conversation abounds in original observations, delivered with no appearance of sententious formality, and seeming to arise spontaneously without study or premeditation. I passed two very agreeable days with him at Glamis, and found him as easy in his manners, and as communicative and frank, as I could have wished.

VIII. TO DR. BLACKLOCK.*

Aberdeen, 15th January, 1766.

I CANNOT express how agreeably I was flattered by the present you were pleased to make me of your works, and by the elegant verses which accompanied it. The acquaintance of good men has always appeared to me almost the only temporal object worthy of my ambition; and I can, with great sincerity, declare, that the consciousness of

* The well-known Scots poet.

g attained your friendship yields me much
r pleasure than any compliments that can be
to my poor merit. Your genius and character
e long known and admired; and although re-
ness of place and diversity of employment had
it extinguished my hopes of becoming per-
ly acquainted with you, I still flattered myself,
in some way or other, I should find an oppor-
y of letting you know how highly I esteem and
you. This opportunity I have found at last,
t is with the utmost pleasure that I avail my-
f it.

I receiving your valuable present, I resolved to
apt an answer in verse; but, by reason of many
oidable interruptions from business, from bad
h, and from studies of a most unpoetical na-
it advanced more slowly than I could have
ed. I found means, however, to bring it to a
lusion two months ago, and sent it in a cover
essed to Dr. Gregory. I heard, some days ago,
it had come safely to hand, and that you was
ed to give it a favourable reception. You will
y perceive, by its miscellaneousness, that the
osition of it must have been interrupted with
rent and long intervals; yet I have attempted
ive it a kind of unity, and I hope, upon the
le, it is not more incoherent than a poetical
le may be allowed to be. There is, perhaps,
e asperity in it than you can approve; there is,
ed, more than I will undertake to excuse; but
a one dips into certain subjects, it is perhaps
ult to preserve that meekness of expression,
tame acquiescence of sentiment, which, in the
ary intercourse of mankind, is, for the most

sentiments of his heart. Indeed, I have shewn
 it a piece of contemptible affectation in
 to assume, in his writings, a character
 none of his own. If a man's sentiments
 ought to conceal them altogether; but
 see no reason why he should be ashamed
 However, as a very general prejudice prevails
 the sincerity of poetical protestations,
 rest till I had assured you, in plain prose
 a very high value upon your friendship
 ever account it my honour to act such a
 merit the continuance of it.

That you may long live an honour to
 try, a blessing to your family, and the
 your acquaintance, is my earnest prayer.

IX. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES

nothing, and to whom you could make no just return.

I suppose you have seen my letter to Dr. Blacklock. I hope, in due time, to be acquainted with your sentiments concerning it. I know not whether I have gained my point or not; but, in composing that letter, I was more studious of simplicity of diction than in any other of my pieces. I am not, indeed, in this respect, so very scrupulous as some critics of these times. I see no harm in using an expressive epithet, when, without the use of such an epithet, one cannot do justice to his idea. Even a compounded epithet, provided it be suitable to the genius of our language, and authenticated by some good writer, may often, in my opinion, produce a good effect. My notion of simplicity discards every thing from style which is affected, superfluous, indefinite, or obscure; but admits every grace, which, without encumbering a sentiment, does really embellish and enforce it. I am no friend to those prettinesses of modern style, which one may call the pompous ear-rings and flounces of the Muses, which, with some writers, are so highly in vogue at present: they may, by their glare and fluttering, take off the eye from imperfections, but I am convinced they disguise and disfigure the charms of genuine beauty.

I have of late been much engaged in metaphysics; at least I have been labouring with all my might to overturn that visionary science. I am a member of a club in this town, who style themselves the Philosophical Society. We have meetings every fortnight, and deliver discourses in our turn. I hope you will not think the worse of this society, when

I tell you, that to it the world is indebted for comparative View of the Faculties of Man; "An Inquiry into Human Nature, on the principles of Common Sense." Criticism is the field in which I have hitherto (chiefly at least) chosen to cultivate; but an accidental question lately furnished me with a hint, which I made the subject of four hours' discourse at our last meeting. I have some time wished for an opportunity of publishing something relating to the business of my own profession, and I think I have now found an opportunity; for the doctrine of my last discourse is to be of importance, and I have already finished two-thirds of my plan. My doctrine is this: as we know nothing of the eternal relations of things, *that to us is* and must be *truth*, which we feel that we must believe; and *that to us is* *error*, which we feel that we must disbelieve. We have shown that all genuine reasoning does ultimately terminate in certain principles, which are impossible to disbelieve, and as impossible to prove; that therefore the ultimate standard of truth is common sense, or that instinctive conviction into which all true reasoning does resolve itself; that therefore what contradicts common sense is itself absurd, however subtle the arguments which support it: for such is the ambiguity and insufficiency of language, that it is easy to argue either side of any question with acuteness sufficient to confound one who is not expert in the art of reasoning. My principles, in the main, are essentially different from Dr. Reid's; but they offer a more compendious method of destroying scepticism. I intend to show, (and have already

part shown,) that all sophistical reasoning is marked with certain characters which distinguish it from true investigation: and thus I flatter myself I shall be able to discover a method of detecting sophistry, even when one is not able to give a logical confutation of its arguments. I intend farther to inquire into the nature of that modification of intellect which qualifies a man for being a sceptic; and I think I am able to prove that it is not genius, but the want of it. However, it will be summer before I can finish my project. I own it is not without indignation, that I see sceptics and their writings (which are the bane not only of science, but also of virtue) so much in vogue in the present age.

X. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th September, 1766.

You flatter me very agreeably, by wishing me to engage in a translation of Tasso's "Jerusalem." If I had all the other accomplishments necessary to fit me for such an undertaking, (which is by no means the case,) I have not as yet acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Italian language, although I understand it tolerably well. My proficiency would have been much more considerable, if my health had allowed me to study; but I have been obliged to estrange myself from books for some months past. I intend to persist in my resolution of acquiring that language, for I am wonderfully delighted with the Italian poetry. It does not seem to abound much in those strokes of fancy that raise

admiration and astonishment, in which I think the English very much superior; but it possesses all the milder graces in an eminent degree; in simplicity, harmony, delicacy, and tenderness, it is altogether without a rival. I cannot well account for that neglect of the Italian literature, which, for about a century past, has been fashionable among us. I believe Mr. Addison may have been instrumental in introducing, or, at least, in vindicating it; though I am inclined to think, that he took upon trust, from Boileau, that censure which he past upon the Italian poets, and which has been current among the critics ever since the days of the "Spectator."

A good translation of Tasso would be a very valuable accession to English literature; but it would be a most difficult undertaking, on account of the genius of our language, which, though in the highest degree copious, expressive, and sonorous, is not to be compared with the Italian in delicacy, sweetness, and simplicity of composition; and these are qualities so characteristic of Tasso, that a translator would do the highest injustice to his author, who should fail in transfusing them into his version. Besides, a work of such a nature must not only be laborious, but expensive; so that a prudent person would not choose to engage in it without some hope, not only of being indemnified but even rewarded; and such a hope it would be madness in me to entertain. Yet, to show that I am not averse from the work, (for, luckily for poets, poetry is sometimes its own reward, and at any time amply rewarded, when it gratifies the

desire of a friend,) I design, as soon as I have leisure, and sufficient skill in the language, to try my hand at a short specimen. In the mean time, I flatter myself, you will not think the worse of me for not making a thousand protestations of my insufficiency, and as many acknowledgments of my gratitude for the honour you do me in supposing me capable of such a work. The truth is, I have so much to say on this subject, that if I were only to begin, I should never have done. Your friendship, and your good opinion, which I shall ever account it my honour to cultivate, I do indeed value more than I can express.

Your neglect of the modern philosophical sceptics, who have too much engaged the attention of these times, does equal honour to your understanding and to your heart. To suppose that every thing may be made matter of dispute, is an exceeding false principle, subversive of all true science, and prejudicial to the happiness of mankind. To confute without convincing is a common case, and indeed a very easy matter: in all conviction (at least in all moral and religious conviction) the heart is engaged, as well as the understanding; and the understanding may be satisfied, or at least confounded, with a doctrine, from which the heart recoils with the strongest aversion. This is not the language of a logician; but this, I hope, is the language of an honest man, who considers all science as frivolous, which does not make men wiser and better; and to puzzle with words, without producing conviction, (which is all that our metaphysical sceptics have been able to do,) can never

promote either the wisdom or the virtue of mankind. It is strange that men should so often forget, that "happiness is our being's end and aim." Happiness is desirable for its own sake: truth is desirable only as a mean of producing happiness; for who would not prefer an agreeable delusion to a melancholy truth? What, then, is the use of that philosophy, which aims to inculcate truth at the expense of happiness, by introducing doubt and disbelief in the place of confidence and hope? Surely the promoters of all such philosophy are either the enemies of mankind, or the dupes of their own most egregious folly. I mean not to make any concessions in favour of metaphysical truth: genuine truth and genuine happiness were never inconsistent: but metaphysical truth (such as we find in our sceptical systems) is not genuine, for it is perpetually changing; and no wonder, since it depends not on the common sense of mankind, (which is always the same,) but varies, according as the talents and inclinations of different authors are different. The doctrines of metaphysical scepticism are either true or false; if false, we have little to do with them; if true, they prove the fallacy of the human faculties, and therefore prove too much; for it follows, as an undeniable consequence, that all human doctrines whatsoever (themselves not excepted) are fallacious, and consequently, pernicious, insignificant, and vain.

XI. TO DR. BLACKLOCK.*

Aberdeen, 22d September, 1766.

I AM not a little flattered by your friendly and spirited vindication of the poem on *Buso*.† Among the invidious and malicious I have got a few enemies on account of that performance; among the candid and generous, not one. This, joined to the approbation of my own conscience, is entirely sufficient to make me easy on that head. I have not yet heard, whether my little work has been approved or condemned in England. I have not even heard whether it has been published or not. However, the days of romantic hope are now happily over with me, as well as the desire of public applause; a desire of which I never had any title to expect the gratification, and which, though I had been able to gratify it, would not have contributed a single mite to my happiness. Yet I am thankful to Providence for having endued me with an inclination to poetry; for, though I have never been supremely blest in my own Muse, I have certainly been gratified, in the most exquisite degree, by the productions of others.

Those pieces of mine, from which I have received the highest entertainment, are such as are altogether improper for publication; being written in a sort of burlesque humour, for the amusement

* In the following letter Dr. Beattie gives a hint of his design of writing the "Minstrel."

† Verses on the report of a monument to be erected in Westminster Abbey, to the memory of a late author.

of some particular friend, or for some select company. Of these I have a pretty large collection and, though I should be ashamed to be public known as the author of many of them, I cannot help entertaining a certain partiality towards them arising, perhaps, from this circumstance in the favour—that the pleasure they have yielded me has been altogether sincere, unmixed with that chagrin which never fails to attend an unfortunate publication.

Not long ago I began a poem in the style and stanza of Spenser, in which I propose to give full scope to my inclination, and be either droll or pathetic, descriptive or sentimental, tender or satirical, as the humour strikes me; for, if I mistake not, the manner which I have adopted admits equally of all these kinds of composition. I have written one hundred and fifty lines, and am surprised to find the structure of that complicated stanza so little troublesome. I was always fond of it, for I think it the most harmonious that ever was contrived. It admits of more variety of pause than either the couplet or the alternate rhyme and it concludes with a pomp and majesty of sound which, to my ear, is wonderfully delightful. It seems also very well adapted to the genius of our language, which, from its irregularity of inflexion and number of monosyllables, abounds in diversified terminations, and consequently renders our poetry susceptible of an endless variety of legitimate rhymes. But I am so far from intending this performance for the press, that I am morally certain it never will be finished. I shall add a stanza *now and then*, when I am at leisure, and when I

have no humour for any other amusement; but I am resolved to write no more poetry with a view to publication, till I see some dawnings of a poetical taste among the generality of readers, of which, however, there is not at present any thing like an appearance.

My employment, and indeed my inclination, leads me rather to prose composition; and in this way I have much to do. The doctrines commonly comprehended under the name of moral philosophy are at present overrun with metaphysics; a luxuriant and tenacious weed, which seldom fails to choke and extirpate the wholesome plants, which it was perhaps intended to support and shelter. To this literary weed I have an insuperable aversion; which becomes stronger and stronger, in proportion as I grow more and more acquainted with its nature, and qualities, and fruits. It is very agreeable to the paradoxical and licentious spirit of the age; but I am thoroughly convinced, that it is fatal to true science, an enemy to the fine arts, destructive of genuine sentiment, and prejudicial to the virtue and happiness of mankind. There is a little Ode of yours on the refinements of metaphysical philosophy, which I often read with peculiar satisfaction, and with high approbation of your spirit and sentiments:

You, who would be truly wise,
To Nature's light unveil your eyes,
Her gentle call obey:
She leads by no false wandering glare,
No voice ambiguous strikes your ear,
To bid you vainly stray.

Not in the gloomy cell recluse,
 For noble deeds, or generous views,
 She bids us watch the night:
 Fair virtue shines to all display'd,
 Nor asks the tardy schoolman's aid,
 To teach us what is right.

Pleasure and pain she sets in view,
 And which to shun, and which pursue,
 Instructs her pupil's heart.
 Then, letter'd Pride! say, what thy gain,
 To mask, with so much fruitless pain,
 Thy ignorance with art?

XII. TO THE HON. CHARLES BOYD.

Aberdeen, 16th November

Of all the chagrins with which my present state of health is attended, none afflicts me more than my inability to perform the duties of friendship. The offer which you were generously to make me of your correspondence, flattered me extremely; but, alas! I have not as yet been able to avail myself of it. While the good weather continued, I strolled about the country, and made many strenuous attempts to run away from the odious giddiness; but the more I struggled, the more closely it seemed to stick by me. A fortnight ago the hurry of my winter business began; and, at the same time, my malady increased with more violence than ever, rendering me incapable of reading, writing, and thinking. I am now a little better, so as to be able to

* Second son of the earl of Kilmarnock, who was beheaded on Tower-hill in August 1746, and brother of Erroll.

page, and write a sentence or two, without stopping; which, I assure you, is a very great matter. My hopes and my spirits begin to revive once more. I flatter myself I shall soon get rid of this infirmity; nay, that I shall ere long be in the way of becoming a *great man*. For have I not headaches, like Pope? vertigo, like Swift? gray hairs, like Homer? Do I not wear large shoes, (for fear of corns,) like Virgil? and sometimes complain of sore eyes, (though not of *lippitude*,) like Horace? Am I not at this present writing invested with a garment not less ragged than that of Socrates? Like Joseph the patriarch, I am a mighty dreamer of dreams; like Nimrod the hunter, I am an eminent builder of castles (in the air.) I procrastinate, like Julius Cæsar; and very lately, in imitation of Don Quixote, I rode a horse, lean, old, and lazy, like Rozinante. Sometimes, like Cicero, I write bad verses; and sometimes bad prose, like Virgil. This last instance I have on the authority of Seneca. I am of small stature, like Alexander the Great; I am somewhat inclinable to fatness, like Dr. Arbuthnot and Aristotle; and I drink brandy and water, like Mr. Boyd. I might compare myself, in relation to many other infirmities, to many other *great men*; but if fortune is not influenced in my favour by the particulars already enumerated, I shall despair of ever recommending myself to her good graces. I once had some thought of soliciting her patronage on the score of my resembling great men in their good qualities; but I had so little to say on that subject, that I could not *for my life furnish matter for one well-rounded period; and, you know, a short ill-turned speech is,*

very improper to be used in an address to a female deity.

Do not you think there is a sort of antipathy between philosophical and poetical genius? I question whether any one person was ever eminent for both. Lucretius lays aside the poet when he assumes the philosopher, and the philosopher when he assumes the poet. In the one character he is truly excellent, in the other he is absolutely nonsensical. Hobbes was a tolerable metaphysician, but his poetry is the worst that ever was. Pope's "Essay on Man" is the finest philosophical poem in the world; but it seems to me to do more honour to the imagination than to the understanding of its author: I mean, its sentiments are noble and affecting, its images and allusions apposite, beautiful, and new; its wit transcendently excellent; but the scientific part of it is very exceptionable. Whatever Pope borrows from Leibnitz, like most other metaphysical theories, is frivolous and unsatisfying; what Pope gives us of his own, is energetic, irresistible, and divine. The incompatibility of philosophical and poetical genius is, I think, no unaccountable thing. Poetry exhibits the general qualities of a species; philosophy the particular qualities of individuals. *This* forms its conclusions from a painful and minute examination of single instances; *that* decides instantaneously, either from its own instinctive sagacity, or from a singular and unaccountable penetration, which at one glance sees all the instances which the philosopher must leisurely and progressively scrutinize, one by one. *This* persuades you gradually, and by detail; the *other* overpowers you in an instant by a single ef-

fort. Observe the effect of argumentation in poetry; we have too many instances of it in Milton: it transforms the noblest thoughts into drawling inferences, and the most beautiful language into prose: it checks the tide of passion, by giving the mind a different employment in the comparison of ideas. A little philosophical acquaintance with the most beautiful parts of nature, both in the material and immaterial system, is of use to a poet, and gives grace and solidity to poetry; as may be seen in the "Georgics," the "Seasons," and the "Pleasures of Imagination:" but this acquaintance, if it is any thing more than superficial, will do a poet rather harm than good; and will give his mind that turn for minute observation, which enfeebles the fancy by restraining it, and counteracts the native energy of judgment, by rendering it fearful and suspicious.

XIII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 8th January, 1767.

I THANK you for your excellent description of Mrs. Montague; * I have heard much of that lady, and I admire her as an honour to her sex and to human nature. I am very happy to hear, that, from the favourable representations of my friends, she has done me the honour to think of me with approbation. I cannot flatter myself with the hope of ever

* This alludes to a letter which sir William Forbes had written to him, giving an account of a visit which Mrs. Montague, in the autumn of 1766, had paid to the late Dr. Gregory in Edinburgh.

having it in my power to let her know how much I esteem her ; but I shall rejoice in the remembrance of having been, in some little degree, esteemed by her.

The favourable reception you gave to my little poem* demands my acknowledgments. I aimed at simplicity in the expression, and something like uncommonness in the thought ; and I own I am not ill pleased with it upon the whole, though I am sensible it does not answer the purpose for which I made it. I wrote it at the desire of a young lady of this country, who has a taste both for poetry and music, and wanted me to make words for a Scots tune called " Pentland Hills," of which she is very fond. The verses correspond well enough with the measure and subject of the tune, but are extremely unsuitable for the purpose of a song.

My broken health, and a hurry of other business, has for a long time interrupted my Italian studies, to my very great regret. However, within the last fortnight, I have read five or six of Metastasio's operas with much pleasure. We are apt to despise the Italian opera, and, perhaps, not altogether without reason ; but I find the operas of Metastasio very far superior to what I expected. There is a sameness in the fables and character of this author ; and yet he seems to me to have more of character in his drama than any other poet of this or the last age. A reader is generally interested in his pieces from beginning to end ; for they are full of incident, and the incidents are often surprising and un-

expected. He has a happy talent at heightening distress; and very seldom falls into that unmeaning rant and declamation which abounds so much on the French stage. In a word, I should not scruple to compare the modern Italian opera, as it appears in Metastasio, to the ancient Greek tragedy. The rigid observation of the unities of place and time introduces many improprieties into the Greek drama, which are happily avoided by the less methodical genius of the Italian. I cannot, indeed, compare the little Italian songs, which are often very impertinent as well as very silly, to the odes of the ancient tragedians: but a poet must always sacrifice something to the genius of his age. I dare say Metastasio despises those little *morceaux* of sing-song; and it is evident, from some of his performances in that way, that he is qualified to excel in the more solemn lyric style, if it were suitable to the taste of his countrymen. Some of his little songs are very pretty, and exhibit agreeable pictures of nature, with a brevity of description, and sweetness of style, that is hardly to be found in any other modern odes. I beg leave to mention, as instances, the songs in the 7th and 15th scenes of the second, and the 1st of the third act of "Artaserse." By the bye, the songs in this opera, as it is now adapted to the English stage, seem to be very ill translated.

You will readily believe, that I rejoice to hear of Dr. Gregory's success. I earnestly wish, for the honour of human nature, and for the good of society, that he may still be more and more successful. The reception his talents and his virtues have met with, gives me a better opinion of the present

There is a famous stanza in the 4
'Tasso's "Gierusalemme," which has
quoted as an instance of the harmony o
language :

Chiama gli abitator de l'ombre eterne
Il rauco suon de la tartarea tromba ;
Treman le spaciose atre caverne,
E l'aer cieco a quel rumor rimbomba :
Ne stridendo cosi da le superne
Regioni del cielo il folgor piomba,
Ne si scossa giamai trema la terra,
Quando i vapori in sen gravida serva.

I attempted, the other day, in a soliti
turn this passage into English ; and p
following lines, which are as obstrepe
as the original, but, I am afraid, not so

I have not Hoole at hand just now; Fairfax runs thus :

The dreary trumpet blew a dreadful blast,
 And rumbled through the lands and kingdoms under;
 Through vastness wide it roar'd, and hollows vast,
 And fill'd the deep with horror, fear, and wonder.
 Not half so dreadful noise the tempest cast,
 That fall from skies with storms of hail and thunder;
 Not half so loud the whistling winds do sing,
 Broke from the earthen prisons of their king.

This is sonorous, but tautological, and not quite true to the original: Fairfax makes no mention of the earthquake, and introduces, in the place of it, what is really a bathos. Wind was never so loud as thunder.

XIV. TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 2d March, 1767.

I HAVE led a very retired life this winter; the condition of my health having prevented my going into company. By dint of regularity and attention, I flatter myself I have now established my health on a tolerable footing; for I have been better during the two last months than for a year before.

My leisure hours, of which I have but few at this season, have been employed in reading Metastasio, an author whom I now understand pretty well, and of whom I am very fond. I have also finished my essay on—I know not well how to call it; for its present title-page, “An Essay on Reason and Common Sense,” must be altered.

Some persons, who wish well to me and to my

principles, have expressed their wishes, in p strong terms, to see this essay in print. They I have set the sceptics in a new point of view treating them without any kind of reserve or ference; and that it might be of use to those may be in danger from their doctrines, to con them in the same light. However, I am far being convinced that it would be proper to pu such a treatise; for the principles are quite fashionable; and there is a keenness of expre in some passages, which could please only a namely, those who are thoroughly convinced o truth and importance of religion. I shall b rected entirely by you and Dr. Gregory, and other friends at Edinburgh. At any rate, I d repent my having written it; it has rivette conviction of the insignificance of metaphysic scepticism; and I hope it will be of some u the young people under my care; for whose ciples (at least as far as they depend upon hold myself accountable to my own conscienc the public.

XV. TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 20th May, 1

My performance in Spenser's stanza has no vanced a single line these many months. called the "Minstrel." The subject was sugg by a dissertation on the old minstrels, whi prefixed to a collection of ballads lately pub by Dodsley, in three volumes. I proposed to *an account of the birth, education, and adver*

of one of those bards; in which I shall have full scope for description, sentiment, satire, and even a certain species of humour and of pathos, which, in the opinion of my great master, are by no means inconsistent, as is evident from his works. My hero is to be born in the south of Scotland; which you know was the native land of the English minstrels—I mean of those minstrels who travelled into England, and supported themselves there by singing their ballads to the harp. His father is a shepherd. The son will have a natural taste for music and the beauties of nature; which, however, languishes for want of culture, till in due time he meets with a hermit, who gives him some instruction; but endeavours to check his genius for poetry and adventures, by representing the happiness of obscurity and solitude, and the bad reception which poetry has met with in almost every age. The poor swain acquiesces in this advice, and resolves to follow his father's employment; when, on a sudden, the country is invaded by the Danes, or English borderers, (I know not which,) and he is stripped of all his little fortune, and obliged by necessity to commence minstrel. This is all that I have as yet concerted of the plan. I have written 150 lines, but my hero is not yet born, though now in a fair way of being so, for his parents are described and married. I know not whether I shall ever proceed any farther: however, I am not dissatisfied with what I have written.

XVI. TO THE REV. JAMES WILLIAMSON.

Aberdeen, 22d October, 1767.

I HAVE been studying Rousseau's miscellanies lately. His "Epistle to D'Alembert," on theatrical exhibitions, I think excellent, and perfectly decisive. His discourse on the effects of the sciences is spirited to a high degree, and contains much matter of melancholy meditation. I am not so much of his mind in regard to the origin of inequality among mankind, though I think the piece on this subject has been much misunderstood by critics, and misrepresented by wits. Even by his own confession, it is rather a *jeu d'esprit* than a philosophical inquiry; for he owns, that the natural state, such as he represents it, did probably never take place, and probably never will; and if it had taken place, he seems to think it impossible that mankind should ever have emerged from it without some very extraordinary alteration in the course of nature. Farther, he says, that this natural state is not the most advantageous for man; for that the most delightful sentiments of the human mind could not exert themselves till man had relinquished his brutal and solitary nature, and become a domestic animal. At this period, and previous to the establishment of property, he places the age most favourable to human happiness; which is just

* Mr. Williamson had been his pupil. This gentleman afterwards became a fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, and distinguished himself by his skill in mathematics. The following letter is curious, as it gives us the sentiments of Dr. Beattie, relative to some of Rousseau's works.

BEATTIE'S LETTERS.

what the poets have done before him, in their description of the golden age; so that his system is not that preposterous thing it has been represented. Yet he says many things in this treatise to which I cannot agree. His solitary and savage man is too much of a brute; and many of his observations are founded on facts not well ascertained, and very ambiguous in their meaning. There is a little treatise of his, which he calls a letter to Mr. Voltaire, which I read with much pleasure, as I found it to be a transcript of my own sentiments in regard to Pope's maxim, "Whatever is, is right."

XVII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 17th January, 1768.

I HAVE been intending, for these several weeks, to write to you, though it were only to assure you of the continuance of my esteem and attachment. This place, you know, furnishes little amusement, either political or literary; and at this season it is rather more barren than usual.

I have, for a time, laid aside my favourite studies, that I might have leisure to prosecute a philosophical inquiry, less amusing, indeed, than poetry criticism, but not less important. The extraordinary success of the sceptical philosophy has filled me with regret. I wish I could undeceive myself in regard to this matter. Perhaps this is vain; but it can do no harm to make the attempt. The point I am now labouring to prove, is the universality and immutability of moral sentiments—a point which has been brought into disrepute by the friends and by the enemies of

virtue. In an age less licentious in its *principles*, it would not, perhaps, be necessary to insist *much* on this point. At present it is very *necessary*. Philosophers have ascribed all religion to *human* policy. Nobody knows how soon they may ascribe all morality to the same origin; and then the foundations of human society, as well as of human happiness, will be effectually undermined. To accomplish this end, Hobbes, Hume, Mandeville, and even Locke, have laboured; and, I am sorry to say, from my knowledge of mankind, that their labour has not been altogether in vain. Not that the works of these philosophers are generally read, or even understood by the few who read them. It is not the mode, now-a-days, for a man to think for himself; but they greedily adopt the conclusions, without any concern about the arguments or principles whence they proceed; and they justify their own credulity by general declamations upon the transcendent merit of their favourite authors, and the universal deference that is paid to their genius and learning. If I can prove those authors guilty of gross misrepresentations of matters of fact, unacquainted with the human heart, ignorant even of their own principles, the dupes of verbal ambiguities, and the votaries of frivolous though dangerous philosophy, I shall do some little service to the cause of truth; and all this I will undertake to prove in many instances of high importance.

You have no doubt seen Dr. Blacklock's new book.* I was very much surprised to see my name!

* "Paraclesis, or Consolations deduced from Natural and Revealed Religion."

prefixed to the dedication, as he never had given me the least intimation of such a design. His friendship does me great honour. I should be sorry, if, in this instance, it has got the better of his prudence; and, I have some reason to fear, that my name will be no recommendation to the work, at least in this place, where, however, the book is very well spoken of by some who have read it. I should like to know how it takes at Edinburgh.

XVIII. TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 25th February, 1768.

I INTENDED long ago to write to you; but several pieces of business, some of them unexpected, have, from time to time, prevented me. The writing out a copy of Mr. Gray's poems for the press has employed me the last fortnight. They are to be printed at Glasgow, by Foulis, with the author's own permission, which I solicited and obtained: and he sent me four folio pages of notes and additions to be inserted in the new edition. The notes are chiefly illustrations of the two Pindaric odes, more copious, indeed, than I should have thought necessary: but, I understand, he is not a little chagrined at the complaints which have been made of their obscurity; and he tells me, that he wrote these notes out of spite. "The Long Story" is left out in this edition, at which I am not well pleased; for, though it has neither head nor tail, beginning nor end, it abounds in humorous description, and the versification is exquisitely fine. Three new poems (never before printed) are inserted; two of which are imitations from the Nor-

wegian, and one is an imitation from *the*. He versified them, he says, "because *the* wild spirit in them, which struck him." the first of the Norwegian pieces he has a hint of the *web*, in the ode on the Welsh but the imitation far exceeds the original; original, in his version, begins in this mann

Now the storm begins to lower;
 Haste, the loom of hell prepare :
 Iron sleet of arrowy shower
 Hurtles in the darken'd air.
 See the gristly texture grow ;
 'Tis of human entrails made ;
 And the weights that play below,
 Each a gasping warrior's head.
 Shafts, for shuttles, dipp'd in gore,
 Shoot the trembling chords along ;
 Sword, that once a monarch bore,
 Keep the tissue close and strong.

The second Norwegian piece, is a dialogue between Odin and a prophetess in her grave, by incantation, he makes to speak. One of the most remarkable passages in it, is the following description of a dog, which far exceeds every of the kind I have seen :

Him the dog of darkness spied,
 His shaggy throat he open'd wide,
 While from his jaws, with carnage fill'd,
 Foam and human gore distill'd.
 Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
 Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin ;
 And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
 The father of the powerful spell.

I give you these passages, partly to satisfy, and partly to raise, your curiosity. I expect the book will be out in a few weeks, if Foulis be diligent, which it is his interest to be, as there is another edition of the same just now printing by Dodsley. I gave him notice of this, by Mr. Gray's desire, two months ago; but it did not in the least abate his zeal for the undertaking.

XIX. TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 1st July, 1768.

I HAVE at last found an opportunity of sending you the Scottish poems which I mentioned in a former letter.* The dialect is so licentious, (I mean it is so different from that of the south country, which is acknowledged the standard of broad Scotch,) that I am afraid you will be at a loss to understand it in many places. However, if you can overlook this inconvenience, together with the tediousness of some passages, and the absurdity of others, I doubt not but you will receive some amusement from the perusal. The author excels most in describing the solitary scenes of a mountainous country, and the manners and conversation of the lowest sort of our people. Whenever he attempts to step out of this sphere, he becomes absurd. This sphere is, indeed, the only one of which he has had any experience. He has been for these forty years, a schoolmaster in one of the most sequestered parishes in the Highlands of Scotland; where he had

* The "Fortunate Shepherdess," and other poems, by Alexander Ross of Lochlee.

to come to this town, on so
a good-humoured, social, l
without clownishness, an
lance. He put into my h
manuscripts in verse, chief
I believe sir Richard Blac
more voluminous author.
lished seemed to me the be
tion : indeed, many of the
a reading. He told me l
single line with a view to
amuse a solitary hour. S
country set on foot a subsc
poems ; in consequence of w
and he will clear by the pu
pounds, a sum far exceedin
pectations ; for, I believe

ever, I fear I have exhausted my whole stock of Scottish words in these few lines; for I endeavoured to make the style as broad as possible, that it might be the better adapted to the taste of those whose curiosity I wished to raise. You will observe, that Mr. Ross is peculiarly unfortunate in his choice of proper names. One of his heroes is called by a woman's name, Rosalind. The injurious mountaineers he called *Sevitiens*, with a view, no doubt, to express their cruelty; but the printer, not understanding Latin, has changed it into *Sevilians*. The whole is incorrectly printed.

The following epigram has some merit. It is said to have been written by Voltaire; but this I doubt. I have subjoined a translation, of which I only wrote the first five lines. The three last are by Mr. Charles Boyd, lord Erroll's brother:

Epitaphe sur le roi de Prusse.

Ce mortel profana tous les talens divers,
 Il charma les humains qui furent ses victimes,
 Barbare en action, et philosophe en vers,
 Il chanta les vertus, et commit tous les crimes.
 Hui du Dieu d'Amour, cher au Dieu de Combats,
 Il bagna dans le sang l'Europe et la patrie,
 Cent mille hommes par lui reçurent le trépas,
 Et pas un n'en reçut la vie.

He every human talent misemploy'd,
 And men at once delighted and destroy'd;
 Savage in action, but a sage in rhyme,
 Each virtue sung, and practis'd every crime;
 The scorn of Venus, but of Mars the pride,
 He fill'd his country and the world with strife.
 Thousands for him in honour's bed have died,
 But from his own not one e'er sprang to life.

of the French critics with regard to it, it is accounted by them the greatest that ever human wit produced, in any age. For my part, I judge of it without prejudice for or against it, and as I would judge of "Gierusalemme," or any other work, in which I have no national concern.

Among the beauties of this work I would mention its style, which, though raised above prose, as the genius of the language will permit, is elegant and simple, though sometimes, compared to English poetry, it may have the appearance of being too prosaic. *Où plus Valois ne regnait plus—Henri savait par grand avantage—C'est un usage anti-que parmi nous—De Paris. à l'instant il j porte*—and many others, have nothing to recommend them from the flattest prose but

nious than one could expect, who has not a greater niceness of ear in regard to the French numbers than I can pretend to have. I know not whence it happens, that I, who am very sensible of the Greek, Latin, and Italian harmony, can never bring myself to relish that of the French, although I understand the French language as well as any of the others. Is it true, as Rousseau asserts, that this language, on account of the incessant monotony of the pronunciation, is incapable of harmony? I should like to have your sentiments on this subject.

The thoughts or reflections in this poem are not too much crowded, nor affectedly introduced; they are, in general, proper and nervous, frequently uncommon. The author evidently appears to be a man of wit, yet he does not seem to take any pains to appear so. The fable is distinct, perspicuous, and intelligible; the character of Henry historically just; and the description of particular objects apposite, and sometimes picturesque.

But his descriptions are often of too general a nature, and want that minuteness which is necessary to interest a reader. They are rather historical than poetical descriptions. This is no verbal distinction; there is real ground for it. An historian may describe from hearsay; a poet must describe from seeing and experience; and this he is enabled to do by making use of the eye of imagination. What makes a description natural? It is such a selection of particular qualities as we think that we ourselves would have made, if we had been spectators of the object. What makes a description picturesque? It is a selection, not of every circumstance or quality, but of those which most power-

fully attract the notice, and influence the affections and imagination of the spectator. In a word, a poet must, either in vision or reality, be a spectator of the objects he undertakes to describe: an historian (being confined to truth) is generally supposed to describe from hearsay; or, if he describe what he has seen, he is not at liberty to insert one circumstance, and omit another; magnify this, and diminish that; bring one forward, and throw the other into the back-ground: he must give a detail of all the circumstances, as far as he knows them, otherwise he is not a faithful historian. Now, I think, through the whole of this poem, Voltaire shows himself more of an historian than a poet; we understand well enough what he says, but his representations, for the most part, are neither picturesque nor affecting.

To one who has read the second book of Virgil, Voltaire's "Massacre of St. Bartholomew" will appear very trifling. It is uninteresting and void of incident; the horrors of it arise only upon reflection; the imagination is not terrified, though the moral sense disapproves. The parting of Henry and Mad. D'Estrees is another passage that disappointed me; it is expressed in a few general terms, that produce no effect. The parting of Dido and Æneas, of Armida and Rinaldo, are incomparably fine, and do as far exceed that of Henry and his paramour, as the thunder of heaven transcends the mustard-bowl of the playhouse.

There is hardly an attempt at character in the poem. That of Henry is purely historical; and, though well enough supported on the whole, is not placed in those difficult and trying circumstances,

which draw forth into action the minuter springs of the soul. Before I get to the end of the Iliad, I am as much acquainted with Homer's heroes as if I had been personally known to them all for many years; but of Voltaire's hero I have only a confused notion. I know him to be brave and amorous, a lover of his country, and affectionate to his friends; and this is all I know of him, and I could have learned as much from a common newspaper.

I acknowledge Voltaire's fable to be perspicuous, but I think it uninteresting, especially towards the end. We foresee the event, but our expectations are not raised by it. The catastrophe is not brought about by any striking incident, but by a series of incidents that have little or nothing in them to engage or surprise the reader. Henry's conversion is a very poor piece of work. Truth descends from heaven to the king's tent, with a veil over her, which she removes by little and little, till at length her whole person appears in a glorious, but undazzling lustre. This may be good philosophy, but it is very indifferent poetry. It affects not the imagination, nor reconciles the reader to the event. Henry is converted, but we know not how or why. The catastrophe of Don Quixote is similar to this. Both Cervantes and Voltaire seem to have been in a haste to conclude; and this is all the apology I can offer for them.

I mention not Voltaire's confusion of fabulous and real personages in his machinery; this has been remarked by others. But I cannot help observing, that his invocation to the Historic Muse is extremely injudicious. It warns the reader to ex-

pect nothing but truth, and consequently appearance of fiction in the sequel must produce effect, and bear the mark of improbability, would not have borne if our author had been content to follow the example of his predecessor. Virgil pretends to no better authority than to *Sit mihi fas audita loqui*; and Homer throws himself entirely upon his Muse, and is satisfied with the instrument through which she speaks. The dream in the seventh canto (which the critics think superior in merit to the whole of the disappointed me much, though, in some passages, it is not amiss. But heaven is not the instrument of poets. St. Louis's prayer, in the last is an odd one. He treats his Maker very calmly and almost threatens him. I observed in the *Enriade* some mixed and some improper metaphors but did not mark them. One, however, of *L'Eternel a ses vœux se laisse penetrer*. The whole, I am very much of Denina's mind with regard to this poem—*Se nell' Enriade non si veggono molti passaggi pieni di affetti, nè molte orazioni gagliarde, e che esprimano il carattere dell'eroe, nè quella ubertà d'immagini e di tratti sorprendenti d'immaginazione, come in Omero, Virgilio, Ariosto, Tasso, e Milton, non vi sono le superfluità, nè le stravaganze che in alcuni di questi si notano; e chicchessia può con gusto e senza fastidio leggere l'Enriade senza saziarsi di questo taggio, che l'autore dee riconoscere dalla virtù e dalla forza del suo stile, e dall'energia de' suoi versi.*

Reserve is the bane of friendly intercourse. It is a screen of error, and the support of prejud

have, therefore, spoken freely on this occasion, because I would willingly embrace every opportunity of rectifying my errors, and putting myself in the way of information. If you approve of my sentiments, I shall believe them right; if not, I shall carefully review and correct them. I flatter myself I am of no country, but a citizen of the world. I have received much entertainment from the works of Voltaire; but I do not admire him much in his critical capacity. I know Mrs. Boyd will support me in this; for she understands and admires Shakespeare, who seems to be the object of Voltaire's envy in a particular degree.

The following lines from Tasso have often been quoted as an instance of the unrivalled harmony of the Italian language:

Chiama gli abitator de l' ombre eterne, &c.

I quote these lines, that I may have an opportunity of giving you a translation of them, which I made a few days ago. I think I am as obstreperous as my original, but not so musical:

Forthwith to summon all the tribes of hell,* &c.

Here is another *morçeau*, written lately in imitation of the Italian. I attempted this, because I was dissatisfied with the common translation of it,

* The original and translation of this stanza are both inserted in the letter to sir William Forbes, No. XIII.

which is given by the person who adapted "Artaxerxes" to the English stage :

L'onda dal mar divisa
 Bagna la valle, e 'l monte,
 Va passeggera
 In fiume,
 Va prigioniera
 In fonte;
 Mormora sempre, e geme,
 Fin che non torna al mar :
 Al mar, dov' ella nacque,
 Dove acquistò gli umori,
 Dove da' lunghi errori
 Spera di riposar.

Metastasio Artaserse, att. 3. sc. 1.

Waters, from the ocean borne,
 Bathe the valley and the hill,
 Prison'd in the fountain mourn,
 Warble down the winding rill;
 But, wherever doom'd to stray,
 Still they murmur and complain,
 Still pursue their lingering way,
 Till they join their native main:
 After many a year of woe,
 Many a long, long wandering past,
 Where, at first, they learn'd to flow,
 There they hope to rest at last.

I confined myself to the measure of the old translation, because I wanted that my words should agree with the music, which, in this song, is very good.

XXI. TO DR. BLACKLOCK.*

Aberdeen, 9th January, 1769.

It was very kind in you to read over my "Essay on the Immutability of Moral Sentiment" with so much attention. I wish it deserved any part of the high encomium you bestowed on it. I flatter myself it will receive considerable improvements from a second transcribing, which I intend to begin as soon as I can. Some parts of it will be enlarged, and others, perhaps, shortened: the examples from history, and authorities from ancient authors, will be more numerous: it will be regularly distributed into chapters and sections, and the language will be corrected throughout. The first part, which treats of the permanency of truth in general, is now in great forwardness; ninety pages in quarto are finished, and materials provided for as many more. The design of the whole you will guess from the part you have seen. It is to overthrow scepticism, and establish conviction in its place; a conviction not in the least favourable to bigotry or prejudice, far less to a persecuting spirit; but such a conviction as produces firmness of mind, and stability of principle, in a consistence with moderation, candour, and liberal inquiry. If I understand my own design, it is certainly this; whether I shall accomplish this design or not, the event only will determine. Meantime I go on with cheerfulness in this intricate and fatiguing study, because I would fain

* In this letter Dr. Beattie gives an account of his motives for writing and publishing his "Essay on Truth."

hope that it may do some good; harm I think cannot possibly do any.

Perhaps you are anxious to know what first induced me to write on this subject: I will tell as briefly as I can. In my younger days I chiefly for the sake of amusement, and I found self best amused with the classics, and what call the *belles lettres*. Metaphysics I disliked; thematics pleased me better; but I found myself neither improved nor gratified by that study. When Providence allotted me my present station, it came incumbent on me to read what had been written on the subject of morals and human nature: the works of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume were celebrated as master-pieces in this way of thinking, therefore, I had recourse. But as I began to study them with great prejudices in their favour, you will readily conceive how strangely I was surprised to find them, as I thought, replete with absurdities: I pondered these absurdities; I weighed the arguments, with which I was sometimes a little confounded; and the result was, that I began at last to suspect my own understanding, and to think that I had not capacity for such a study: I could not conceive it possible, that the absurdities of these authors were so great as they seemed to be; otherwise, thought I, the world would not admire them so much. About this time, some excellent antiseptical works made their appearance, particularly Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind." Then it was that I began to have a little more confidence in my own judgment, when I found it confirmed by those of whose abilities I did not entertain the least distrust. I reviewed my authors again

with a very different temper of mind. A very little truth will sometimes enlighten a vast extent of science. I found that the sceptical philosophy was not what the world imagined it to be, nor what I, following the opinion of the world, had hitherto imagined it to be; but a frivolous, though dangerous, system of verbal subtilty, which it required neither genius, nor learning, nor taste, nor knowledge of mankind, to be able to put together; but only a captious temper, an irreligious spirit, a moderate command of words, and an extraordinary degree of vanity and presumption. You will easily perceive that I am speaking of this philosophy only in its most extravagant state, that is, as it appears in the works of Mr. Hume. The more I study it, the more am I confirmed in this opinion. But while I applauded and admired the sagacity of those who led me into, or at least encouraged me to proceed in, this train of thinking, I was not altogether satisfied with them in another respect. I could not approve that extraordinary adulation which some of them paid to their arch-adversary. I could not conceive the propriety of paying compliments to a man's *heart*, at the very time one is proving that his aim is to subvert the principles of truth, virtue, and religion; nor to his *understanding*, when we are charging him with publishing the grossest and most contemptible nonsense. I thought I then foresaw, what I have since found to happen, that this controversy will be looked upon rather as a trial of skill between two logicians, than as a disquisition in which the best interests of mankind were concerned; and that the world, especially the fashionable part of it, would still be disposed to pay the

greatest deference to the opinions of him who, even by the acknowledgment of his antagonists, was confessed to be the best philosopher and the soundest reasoner. All this has happened, and more. Some, to my certain knowledge, have said, that Mr. Hume and his adversaries did really act in concert, in order mutually to promote the sale of one another's works; as a proof of which, they mention, not only the extravagant compliments that pass between them, but also the circumstance of Dr. Reid and Dr. Campbell sending their manuscripts to be perused and corrected by Mr. Hume before they gave them to the press. I, who know both the men, am very sensible of the gross falsehood of these reports. As to the affair of the manuscripts, it was, I am convinced, candour and modesty that induced them to it. But the world knows no such thing; and, therefore, may be excused for mistaking the meaning of actions that have really an equivocal appearance. I know likewise that they are sincere, not only in the detestation they express for Mr. Hume's irreligious tenets, but also in the compliments they have paid to his talents; for they both look upon him as an extraordinary genius; a point in which I cannot agree with them. But while I thus vindicate them from imputations, which the world, from its ignorance of circumstances, has laid to their charge, I cannot approve them in every thing; I wish they had carried their researches a little farther, and expressed themselves with a little more firmness and spirit. For well I know, that their works, for want of this, will never produce that effect which (if all mankind were cool metaphysical reasoners) might be expected from them.

There is another thing in which my judgment differs considerably from that of the gentlemen just mentioned. They have great metaphysical abilities ; and they love the metaphysical sciences. I do not. I am convinced, that this metaphysical spirit is the bane of true learning, true taste, and true science ; that to it we owe all this modern scepticism and atheism ; that it has a bad effect upon the human faculties, and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life. You will now see wherein my views differ from those of the other answerers of Mr. Hume. I want to show the world, that the sceptical philosophy is contradictory to itself, and destructive of genuine philosophy, as well as of religion and virtue ; that it is in its own nature so paltry a thing, (however it may have been celebrated by some) that to be despised it needs only to be known ; that no degree of genius is necessary to qualify a man for making a figure in this pretended science ; but rather a certain minuteness and suspiciousness of mind, and want of sensibility, the very reverse of true intellectual excellence ; that metaphysics cannot possibly do any good, but may do, and actually have done, much harm ; that sceptical philosophers, whatever they may pretend, are the corrupters of science, the pests of society, and the enemies of mankind. I want to show, that the same method of reasoning, which these people have adopted in their books, if transferred into common life, would show them to be destitute of common sense ; that true philosophers follow a different method of reasoning ; and that, without following a different method, no truth can be discovered. \

want to lay before the public, in as strong a light as possible, the following dilemma: our sceptics either believe the doctrines they publish, or they do not believe them; if they believe them, they are fools—if not, they are a thousand times worse. I want also to fortify the mind against this sceptical poison, and to propose certain criteria of moral truth, by which some of the most dangerous sceptical errors may be detected and guarded against.

You are sensible, that, in order to attain these ends, it is absolutely necessary for me to use great plainness of speech. My expressions must not be so tame as to seem to imply either a diffidence in my principles, or a coldness towards the cause I have undertaken to defend. And where is the man who can blame me for speaking from the heart, and therefore speaking with warmth, when I appear in the cause of truth, religion, virtue, and mankind? I am sure my dear friend Dr. Blacklock will not; he, who has set before me so many examples of this laudable ardour; he, whose style I should be proud to take for my model, if I were not aware of the difficulty, I may say, the insuperable difficulty, of imitating it with success. You need not fear, however, that I expose myself by an excess of passion or petulance. I hope I shall be animated, without losing my temper, and keen, without injury to good manners. In a word, I will be as soft and delicate as the subject and my conscience will allow. One gentleman, a friend of yours,* I shall have occasion to treat with much freedom. I have heard of his virtues. I know he has many virtues;

* Mr. Hume.

God forbid I should ever seek to lessen them, or wish them to be found insincere. I hope they are sincere, and that they will increase in number and merit every day. To his virtues I shall do justice; but I must also do justice to his faults, at least to those faults which are public, and which, for the sake of truth and of mankind, ought not to be concealed or disguised. Personal reflections will be carefully avoided; I hope I am in no danger of falling into them, for I bear no personal animosity against any man whatsoever: sometimes I may, perhaps, be keen; but I trust I shall never depart from the Christian and philosophic character.

A scheme like this of mine cannot be popular, far less can it be lucrative. It will raise me enemies; it will expose me to the scrutiny of the most rigid criticism; it will make me be considered by many as a sullen and illiberal bigot. I trust, however, in Providence, and in the goodness of my cause, that my attempts in behalf of truth shall not be altogether ineffectual, and that my labours shall be attended with some utility to my fellow-creatures. This, in my estimation, will do much more than counterbalance all the inconveniences I have any reason to apprehend. I have already fallen on evil tongues, (as Milton says) on account of this intended publication. It has been reported, that I had written a most scurrilous paper against Mr. Hume, and was preparing to publish it, when a friend of mine interposed, and, with very great difficulty, prevailed on me to suppress it, because he knew it would hurt or ruin my character. Such is the treatment I have to expect from one set of people. I was so provoked when I first heard this

calumny, that I deliberated whether I should not throw my papers into the fire, with a *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*: but I rejected that thought; for so many persons have told me that it was my *duty* to publish these papers, that I almost begin to think so myself. Many have urged me to publish them; none ever dissuaded me. The gentleman named in the report read the essay, and returned it with the highest commendations; but I do not recollect that he ever spoke a syllable about publishing or suppressing it. But I have certainly tired you with so long a detail about so trifling a matter as my works. However, I thought it necessary to say something by way of apology for them, for I find that your good opinion is of too much consequence to my peace, to suffer me to neglect any opportunity of cultivating it.

I informed you, in the letter which I sent by Mr. John Ross, that I was become the father of a son. Both his parents and he are much obliged to you for interesting yourselves so much in that event, and for your kind wishes. He thrives apace, and my wife is thoroughly recovered. You ask me, what are my feelings? Perhaps I shall be in a better condition to answer that question afterwards than now. He is always near me, and never has had any illness; and you know that adversity is the only true touchstone of affection. I find my imagination recoils from the idea of such adversity as would bring my affection to the test. To tell the truth, I am at no great pains to obtrude that idea on my fancy: evils come soon enough; we need not anticipate them. At present, however, I feel enough to convince me experimentally of what I

have proved from the principles of reason in my essay, that this *στοργή* is something entirely different from that affection we feel towards dependents, as well as from that which arises from a habit of long acquaintance.

I long much to see your translation of the French poem ;* pray send it as soon as you can. You need not, I think, be under any apprehensions of meeting with Mr. Home's treatment.† To translate a dramatic poem, can never be made to be on a footing with composing one, and bringing it on the stage. Even Presbyterianism itself allows us to read plays ; and if so, it cannot prohibit the translating of them.

XXII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 19th April, 1769.

* * * * * THE Christian religion, according to my creed, is a very simple thing, intelligible to the meanest capacity, and what, if we are at pains to join practice to knowledge, we may make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with, without turning over many books. It is the distinguishing excellence of this religion, that it is entirely popular, and fitted, both in its doctrines and in its evidences, to all conditions and capacities of reasonable creatures—a character, which does not belong to any other religious or philosophical system that ever appeared

* The play of "Cenie," by D'Happoncourt de Graigny: this Dr. Blacklock had translated, with the title of "Seraphina."

† This alludes to the tragedy of "Douglas."

in the world. I wonder to see so many men eminent both for their piety and for their capacity, labouring to make a mystery of this divine institution. If God vouchsafes to reveal himself to mankind, can we suppose that he chooses to do so in such a manner as that none but the learned and contemplative can understand him? The glibness of mankind can never, in any possible circumstances, have leisure or capacity for learning profound contemplation. If, therefore, we make Christianity a mystery, we exclude the greater part of mankind from the knowledge of it; which is directly contrary to the intention of its Author. I explain from his explicit and reiterated declarations. In a word, I am perfectly convinced, that a moderate acquaintance with the Scripture, particularly the gospels, is all that is necessary to our acquisition of true Christian knowledge. I have looked into some systems of theology; but I have read one of them to an end, because I found I never reap any instruction from them. To make what is clear, by wrapping it up in the veil of mystery and science, was all the purpose that even the best of them seemed to me to answer. True, there are, even in the gospels, and in the discourses of Jesus Christ himself, some things that stand in need of illustration; as when he uses proverbial phrases peculiar to Judea, or alludes to the customs of that country and those times; these obscurities are but few in number, and generally relate to matters of less indispensable use, and I presume, a very moderate share of erudition will afford all that is necessary to make us understand them as far as they were intended to be understood.

us. As these, I am convinced, are your sentiments, you will agree with me in thinking, that it is not necessary for us, even though we were clergymen, to read a great deal of divinity, as it is called. Indeed, I am every day more and more inclined to Dr. Gregory's opinion, (which, by the bye, I think was Solomon's too,) that the reading of many books of any sort is a bad thing, as it tends to withdraw a man's attention from himself, and from those amusements and contemplations, which at once sweeten the temper and cherish the health. You will do me the justice to believe, that, by the word amusements, I do not mean drinking, or gaming, or any of the fashionable modes of dissipation; I mean the study of the works of nature, and some of the best performances in the fine arts, which I have always found the most pleasing, as well as the most salutary amusement, both to my mind and body. But I must certainly have tired you with this long disquisition.

I am much obliged to you for your account of Dr. Lawkesworth. I want much to see his translation of *Telemachus*; but no copies of it have come to this country. The former translations were all very indifferent. I am inclined to think, that the doctor judged right in not making his translation too poetical and figurative. His own prose style is as much ornamented as good prose can well be; and nearly as much (if I mistake not) as Cambray's style, even where it is most poetical. The measured prose (as they call it,) which we have in the translations from Ossian, would, I am afraid, become disgusting in a work so long as *Telemachus*.

gether of the lyric ~~can~~,
the style, and in the arrangement
fable. I wonder how the editor of the
took it into his head to call them epi
are wholly lyric, and can no more be re
the class of epic poems, than Milton's "
Lost" can be called an ode.

The account you give me of the econo
Hawkesworth's family pleases me much.
tirely of your mind in regard to Prote
neries or convents, which are much wan
country, and which, under proper
might, as you justly observe, be produ
best effects. Our reformers seem to
forgot the old maxim, *Fas est et ab*
If any practice was in use among the
was enough to make them reject it;
enough to recommend any pra

music, at least, all good music; that which we have retained being in general so very bad, that it is necessary for a person to have a bad ear before he can relish the worship of the church of Scotland.

XXIII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.*

26th October, 1769.

I THIS moment received yours of the 23d current, enclosing a bank post-bill for 52*l.* 10*s.* I am too much affected with a sense of your and Mr. Arbuthnot's friendship on this, as on all other occasions, to say any thing in the way of thanks or compliment. Like a man on the verge of bankruptcy, I am become almost careless in regard to the extent of the new or old debt I owe to your goodness. If you are determined to persist in heaping favours and obligations upon me, why, be it so; I shall, at least, in one respect, be even with you, or endeavour to be so; I shall try to be as grateful as you are kind. As this book had cost me a good deal of labour, and as I had brought myself to think it a pretty good book, I should have been much disappointed if I had not got it published; and I do firmly believe, that, if it had not been for you, it never would have been published. As this is the light in which I consider what you have now done for me, you will readily believe, from the nature of that attachment which all authors bear to the offspring of their brain, that I have a pretty high sense of the favour.

* The following letter was written in answer to a letter of sir William Forbes, relative to a negotiation for publishing the "Essay on Truth."

The price does really exceed my warmest expectations; nay, I am much afraid that it exceeds the real commercial value of the book; and I am not much surprised that * * * * refuses to have a share in it, considering that he is one of the principal proprietors of Mr. Hume's works, and, in consequence of that, may have such a personal regard for him, as would prevent his being concerned in any work of this nature. In a word, I am highly pleased with the whole transaction, except in this one respect, that you and Mr. Arbuthnot have agreed to be partners in this publication:—this gives me real concern. I know you both despise the risk of losing any thing by it, and will despise the loss when you come to know it, of which, I am afraid, there is too great a chance: but, notwithstanding, I could have wished you out of the scrape; and if it shall afterwards appear that you are losers, I shall be tempted to regret that ever I gave you the opportunity. There are some delicacies on this subject, which embarrass me so much, that I know not how to express myself intelligibly. In a word, you will account the loss a trifle, but to me it will not have that appearance.

- I will now fall to work, and put the last hand to my manuscript. This will take up a week or two, as several things have occurred to me, within these few days, which I think will, when added, make the book much more perfect. I will venture to say, that few authors have ever been more solicitous than I, on this occasion, to make their work correct. It has undergone a most critical examination in the hands of my two friends, doctors Campbell and Gerard, who have both written ob-

servations on it, and who are perfect masters of all the subjects treated in it, and really, in my judgment, the most acute metaphysicians of the age. Both have given me great encouragement, and assured me, that, in their opinion, my book will do good, if people will only vouchsafe it a reading. It was but the other day I received Dr. Gerard's remarks;* and, on my desiring him, honestly and impartially, to give his judgment, "I think," says he, "it is a most excellent book, and cannot fail to do you credit with all the friends of virtue and religion." I mention this only to show you, that, if it shall afterwards appear that I have judged wrong in thinking this book proper to be printed, I am not singular in the mistake. One thing I was particularly careful in recommending to the two gentlemen just mentioned: I desired them, above every thing, to observe, whether I had, in any place, misrepresented my adversaries, or mistaken their doctrine. They tell me, that, in their judgment, I have not, except in two or three passages of no consequence, which, however, I have carefully corrected. I have the more confidence in their judgment in this particular, because they are perfect masters of the modern sceptical philosophy, and are particularly well acquainted with Mr. Hume's writings; indeed, better than any other person I know, except Dr. Reid at Glasgow, to whom, however, they are no ways inferior. Much of my knowledge on these subjects I owe to their conversation and writings, as Dr. Gregory very well

* Dr. Gerard was professor of divinity in the Marischal College, Aberdeen.

knows. Since I am upon this subject, I shall go farther, that the book, now under consideration, has been my principal study these four years. I have actually written it three times over, some parts of it oftener. I have availed myself of reading and conversation, in order I might be aware of all the possible objections could be made to my doctrine. Every one of them that has come to my knowledge, has been canvassed and examined to the bottom, at least, according to the examiner's measure of understanding. This, joined to my natural abhorrence of misrepresentation, and to the sense I have of what my character would suffer, if I could be charged with want of candour; if all this, I say, is not sufficient to make my book correct, I must for ever desist of making it so.

XXIV. TO CAPT. (AFTERWARDS MAJOR) MERCER

Aberdeen, 26th November, 1793

I SHALL not take up your time with enlarging on all the causes that have kept me so long from writing. I shall only tell you, that, while the summer lasted, I went about as much as possible, imposed on myself an abstinence from reading, writing, and thinking, with a view to shake this vile vertigo, which, however, still sticks by me with a closeness of attachment which I could not excuse. Since that time, (I mean since the end of the summer) I have delayed writing, till I should be able to inform you of the fate of the papers which were so good last winter as to read and interest yourself in. They are sold to a bookseller in E

burgh, and are now actually in the press, and will make their public appearance, if I mistake not, in the spring. I have taken no little pains to finish them; and many additions, and illustrations, and corrections, and expunctions, and softenings, and hardenings, have been made on them. With them I intend to bid adieu to metaphysics, and all your authors of profound speculation; for, of all the trades to which that multifarious animal man can turn himself, I am now disposed to look upon intense study as the idlest, the most unsatisfying, and the most unprofitable. You cannot easily conceive with what greediness I now peruse the "Arabian Nights Entertainments," "Gulliver's Travels," "Robinson Crusoe," &c. I am like a man who has escaped from the mines, and is now drinking in the fresh air and light, on the top of some of the mountains of Dalecarlia. These books put me in mind of the days of former years, the romantic æra of fifteen, or the still more careless period of nine or ten: the scenes of which, as they now stand pictured in my fancy, seem to be illuminated with a sort of purple light, formed with the softest, purest gales, and painted with a verdure to which nothing similar is to be found in the degenerate summers of modern times. Here I would quote the second stanza of Gray's "Ode on Eton College," but it would take up too much room, and you certainly have it by heart.

I hear you are likely to be a major in the army soon. I need not tell you on how many accounts I wish that event to take place. I should look on it as a forerunner of your return, which I should certainly rejoice at, even with an excess of joy, though

I had not a single particle of generosity in composition, my own happiness is so much interested in it. Alas! my walks now are solitary. No more do the banks of Dee recite those confabulations, critical, grammatical, philosophical, sentimental, &c. which while they agitated between us. I have not seen a man you left us, whose notions of Homer and Virgil were the same with mine.

I was a fortnight at Edinburgh this week where I saw our friend Sylvester* almost every day. You would be surprised to see his outward appearance little changed. His voice has the same tone as before with a little addition of the English accent, which he went away. As to stature and *embonpoint* is much the same (I fear I have misapplied the word, which, I believe, is never used by the people.) His complexion rather fresher and more than before. He speaks French, Italian, Spanish, man, with fluency, and is as fond of poetry as ever. He never drinks above two or three glasses at a sitting; and, indeed, seems to have acquired great many good qualities by his travelling, without the loss of a single one of those he possessed.

You would see Mr. Gray's installation ode if so, I am sure you have approved it. It is equal to some other of his pieces, but it is not an ode of the panegyrical kind I have ever seen. I have a letter from him since it came out, in which he says, "That it cannot last above a single

* The right honourable Sylvester Douglas, 1st Marquis of Eglar.

if its existence be prolonged beyond that period, it must be by means of newspaper parodies, and witless criticism." He says, he considered himself bound, in gratitude to the duke of Grafton, to write this ode; and that he foresaw the abuse that would be thrown on him for it, but did not think it worth his while to avoid it. I am not of his mind in regard to the duration of the poem. I am much mistaken if it do not carry down the name of his patron to the latest posterity; an honour which, I fear, no other great man of this age will have the chance to receive from the hands of the Muses.

XXV. TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Aberdeen, 27th November, 1769.

THE concern your lordship is pleased to take in my writings does me a great deal of honour. I should think myself very happy, if, by means of them, I could contribute any thing to the advancement of the cause of truth and virtue.

I have not been able, since you left us, to make any considerable additions to the "Minstrel;" all my leisure hours being employed in putting the last hand to my "Essay on Truth," which was actually put to the press about three weeks ago. It will, I think, make its public appearance in the spring. Several important alterations and additions have been made. Most of the asperities have been struck out, and such of them as have been retained are *very much* softened. Still, however, *there are, and must be, some strong pictures and*

expressions, which do not well suit the apathetic equivocating lukewarmness of this age. But express design was, to set our sceptics in a light, and, therefore, I found it necessary to pursue a new method. I want to show, that their reasonings and doctrines are not only false but ridiculous and that their talents, as philosophers and logicians, are absolutely contemptible. Your lordship will, I presume, do me the justice to believe, that I have not *affected* to treat them with more confidence than I think they deserve. I should be ashamed of myself, if, in pleading the cause of truth, I were to personate a character that is not my own. The doctrines I have maintained in this book are, one of them, according to my real sentiments. I have added some remarks on personal identity on the veracity of our senses in regard to extension, distance, magnitude, and those other objects of touch which are commonly referred both to sense and to sight; on the different classes of truths which *certain* truths seem reducible; and I have made several other additions, which, I hope, render the book less exceptionable than it was when your lordship did me the honour to peruse it.

The "Minstrel" I intend to resume next summer. It will consist of three books; and, I promise to be by much the best, and will probably be the last, of my poetical attempts, I propose to finish it at great leisure.

XXVI. TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.*

Aberdeen, 15th December, 1769.

I LAID your letter before a full meeting of our university; and have their orders to return to your lordship their most grateful acknowledgments for your attention to the interests of learning in general, and your generosity to this society in particular. We accept, with the most unfeigned sentiments of gratitude, the noble present you have done us the honour to promise us; and will most zealously endeavour to promote, to the utmost of our power, those good purposes your lordship has so much at heart. We beg to know more particularly, in what way it will be proper for us to propose the prize subjects? and from what sciences the arguments are to be taken? what ranks of students (whether the lower or higher classes, or all, in general) are to be admitted as candidates? in what manner their performances are to be examined? and whether it will be expedient to publish in the newspapers the names of such as shall be thought to have obtained the prize? In these, and in all other particulars, we would choose to be directed by your lordship's judgment.

* The earl of Buchan had been desirous to establish, in the Marischal college at Aberdeen, a prize for the best Greek exercise. The following is Dr. Beattie's answer to his lordship's communication on this subject.

XXVII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 4th May, 1

NOTHING, I think, is stirring in the literary world. All ranks are run mad with politics; and I do not mean, that the nation has no need of instruction; I mean only, that it has neither leisure nor inclination to listen to any.

I am a very great admirer of Armstrong's on "Health;" and, therefore, as soon as I saw that the same author had published two volumes of "Miscellanies," I sent a commission for them with great expectations: but I am miserably disappointed. I know not what is the matter with Armstrong; but he seems to have conceived a violent aversion at the whole human race, except his friends, who, it seems, are dead. He sets the public opinion at defiance; a piece of boldness, which neither Virgil nor Horace were ever so shy as to acknowledge. It is very true, that living authors are often hardly dealt with by their contemporaries; witness Milton, Collins the poet, and many others: but I believe it is equally true, that no good piece was ever published, which did not sooner or later, obtain the public approbation. Is it possible it should be otherwise? People read for amusement. If a book be capable of giving amusement, it will naturally be read; for no man is an enemy to what gives him pleasure. *Books, indeed, being calculated for the intellect of a few, can please only a few; yet, if they*

this effect, they answer all the end the authors intended ; and if those few be men of any note, which is generally the case, the herd of mankind will very willingly fall in with their judgment, and consent to admire what they do not understand. I question whether there are now in Europe two thousand, or even one thousand persons, who understand a word of Newton's "Principia ;" yet there are in Europe many millions who extol Newton as a very great philosopher. Those are but a small number who have any sense of the beauties of Milton ; yet every body admires Milton, because it is the fashion. Of all the English poets of this age, Mr. Gray is most admired, and, I think, with justice ; yet there are, comparatively speaking, but a few who know any thing of his, but his "Churchyard Elegy," which is by no means the best of his works. I do not think that Dr. Armstrong has any cause to complain of the public: his "Art of Health" is not indeed a popular poem, but it is very much liked, and has often been printed. It will make him known and esteemed by posterity ; and, I presume, he will be the more esteemed, if all his other works perish with him. In his "Sketches," indeed, are many sensible, and some striking remarks ; but they breathe such a rancorous and contemptuous spirit, and abound so much in odious vulgarisms and colloquial execrations, that in reading we are as often disgusted as pleased. I know not what to say of his "Universal Almanack : " it seems to me an attempt at humour ; but such humour is either too high or too low for my comprehension. The plan of his tragedy, called *the "Forced Marriage,"* is both obscure and im-

probable; yet there are good strokes in it, particularly in the last scene.

As I know your taste and talents in painting cannot help communicating to you an observation which I lately had occasion, not to make, for I made it before, but to see illustrated in a striking manner. I was reading the Abbé du "Reflections on Poetry and Painting." In his section of the first volume, he gives some very ingenious remarks on two of Raphael's cartoons. Speaking of "Christ's charge to Peter," he says one of the figures in the group of apostles, *de lui est placé un autre apôtre embarrassé et de contenance; on le discerne pour être d'un tempérament mélancholique à la maigreur de son visage, à sa barbe noire et plate, à l'habitude du corps, enfin à tous les traits que les naturalistes assignés à ce tempérament. Il se courbe; ses yeux fixement attachés sur J. C. il est dévoré d'une jalousie morne pour une choix dont il ne se plaint point, mais dont il conservera long tems un vif sentiment: enfin on reconnoit là Judas aussi distement qu'à le voir pendu au figuier, une bourse versée au col. Je n'ai point prêté d'esprit à Raphael, &c.* You see the ingenious abbé is positive; and yet you will immediately recollect that the charge of "Feed my sheep," to which this cartoon refers, was given to Peter after the resurrection, and when, consequently, Judas could not be present.* If it be said, that this charge refers to the keys, which Peter carries in his bosom, a charge given long before—I answer, first,

* John, xxi. 16.

the *sheep* in the back-ground is a presumption of the contrary; and, secondly, that the wounds in the feet and hands of Jesus, and the number of apostles present, which is only eleven, are a certain proof, that the fact to which this cartoon relates happened after the resurrection. The abbé's mistake is of little moment in itself; but it serves to illustrate this observation, that the expression of painting is at the best very indefinite, and generally leaves scope to the ingenious critic *de prêter d'esprit* to the painter.

XXVIII. TO DR. BLACKLOCK.*

Aberdeen, 27th May, 1770.

I CANNOT express how much I think myself indebted to your friendship, in entering so warmly into all my concerns, and in making out so readily, and at such length, the two critical articles. The shortest one was sent back, in course of post, to Mr. Kincaid,† from whom you would learn the reasons that induced me to make some alterations in the analysis you had there made of my book. The other paper I return in this packet. I have made a remark or two at the end, but no alterations. Indeed, how could I? you understand my

* When the "Essay on Truth" was published, it was considered necessary that a short analysis of it should be inserted in the Edinburgh newspapers. The task of writing this analysis was undertaken by Dr. Blacklock. But previously to its publication, he thought proper to submit what he had written to Dr. Beattie, who replied to Dr. Blacklock as follows.

† The publisher.

philosophy as perfectly as I do ; you express it much better, and you embellish it with a great many of your own sentiments, which, though new to me, are exceedingly apposite to my subject, and set some parts of it in a fairer light than I have been able to do in my book. I need not tell you, how happy I am in the thought, that this work of mine has your approbation ; for I know you too well, to impute to mere civility the many handsome things you have said in praise of it. I know you approve it, because I know you incapable to say one thing and think another ; and I do assure you, I would not forego your approbation to avoid the censure of fifty Mr. Humes. What do I say ? Mr. Hume's censure I am so far from being ashamed of, that I think it does me honour. It is, next to his conversion, (which I have no reason to look for) the most desirable thing I have to expect from that quarter. I have heard, from very good authority, that he speaks of me and my book with very great bitterness (I own, I thought he would rather have affected to treat both with contempt ;) and that he says, I have not used him like a gentleman. He is quite right to set the matter upon that footing. It is an odious charge ; it is an objection easily remembered, and, for that reason, will be often repeated by his admirers ; and it has this farther advantage, that being (in the present case) perfectly unintelligible, it cannot possibly be answered. The truth is, I, as a rational, moral, and immortal being, and something of a philosopher, treated him as a rational, moral, and immortal being, a sceptic, and an atheistical writer. My design was, not to make a book full of fashionable

phrases and polite expressions, but to undeceive the public in regard to the merits of the sceptical philosophy, and the pretensions of its abettors. To say, that I ought not to have done this with plainness and spirit, is to say, in other words, that I ought either to have held my peace, or to have been a knave. In this case, I might perhaps have treated Mr. Hume as a gentleman, but I should not have treated society, and my own conscience, as became a man and a Christian. I have all along foreseen, and still foresee, that I shall have many reproaches, and cavils, and sneers, to encounter on this occasion; but I am prepared to meet them. I am not ashamed of my cause; and, if I may believe those whose good opinion I value as one of the chief blessings of life, I need not be ashamed of my work. You are certainly right in your conjecture, that it will not have a quick sale. Notwithstanding all my endeavours to render it perspicuous and entertaining, it is still necessary for the person who reads it *to think a little*; a task to which every reader will not submit. My subject too is unpopular, and my principles such as a man of the world would blush to acknowledge. How then can my book be popular? If it refund the expense of its publication, it will do as much as any person, who knows the present state of the literary world, can reasonably expect from it.

I am not at all surprised at your notions in regard to liberty and necessity. I have known several persons of the best understanding, and of the best heart, who could not get over the arguments in favour of necessity, even though their notions of the absurd and dangerous consequences of fata-

lity were the same with mine. The truth is, I see no possible way of reconciling the fatalists with the liberty-men, except by supposing human liberty to be a self-evident fact, which, perhaps, the fatalists will never acknowledge, and which the staunch Arminian, who has been long in the practice of arguing the matter, would think a dangerous and unnecessary supposition. My own sentiments on this point I have given fairly and honestly in my book. That I am a free agent, is what I do not believe, but what I judge to be of such importance that all morality must be founded on it, yea, and all religion too. To vindicate the ways of God to man, is not so difficult a thing when we acknowledge human liberty; but, on the principles of fatalism, it seems to me to be absolutely impossible.

I beg you will, from time to time, let me know what you hear of the fate of my book. Every author thinks that his works ought to engross everybody's attention. I am not such a novice as to have more of this vanity than my neighbours; I think it highly probable, that my book will be the subject of some conversation, especially at Edinburgh, where Mr. Hume is so well known, and where I happen to be not altogether unknown. At the bye, it was extremely well judged not to mention Mr. Hume's name, except very slightly, in the two critical articles you wrote. People will do a great injustice, if they say or think that my book is written solely against Mr. Hume. Yet many, I am convinced, will say so; and, therefore, it was proper to say nothing in those articles that might diminish such a notion.

XXIX. TO MRS. INGLIS.*

Aberdeen, 24th December, 1770.

WHILE I lived in your neighbourhood, I often wished for an opportunity of giving you my opinion on a subject, in which I know you are very deeply interested; but one incident or other always put it out of my power. That subject is the education of your son, whom, if I mistake not, it is now high time to send to some public place of education. I have thought much on this subject; I have weighed every argument, that I could think of, on either side of the question. Much, you know, has been written upon it; and very plausible arguments have been offered, both for and against a public education. I set not much value upon these: speculating men are continually disputing, and the world is seldom the wiser. I have some little experience in this way; I have no hypothesis to mislead me; and the opinion or prejudice which I first formed upon the subject, was directly contrary to that which experience has now taught me to entertain.

Could mankind lead their lives in that solitude which is so favourable to many of our most virtuous affections, I should be clearly on the side of a private education. But most of us, when we go out into the world, find difficulties in our way, which good principles and innocence alone will not qualify us to encounter; we must have some address

* Daughter of colonel Gardiner. This letter is extremely valuable, as containing Dr. Beattie's sentiments respecting a public or private education for boys.

and knowledge of the world different from what to be learned in books, or we shall soon be puzzled, disheartened, or disgusted. The foundation of knowledge is laid in the intercourse of school-boys or at least of young men of the same age. When a boy is always under the direction of a parent or tutor, he acquires such a habit of looking up to them for advice, that he never learns to think or act for himself; his memory is exercised, indeed in retaining their advice, but his invention is suffered to languish, till at last it becomes totally inactive. He knows, perhaps, a great deal of history or science, but he knows not how to conduct himself on those ever-changing emergencies, which are too minute and too numerous to be comprehended in any system of advice. He is astonished at the most common appearances, and discouraged with the most trifling (because unexpected) obstacles; and he is often at his wits' end, where a boy with much less knowledge, but more experience, would instantly devise a thousand expedients. Conscious of his own superiority in some things, he would find himself so much inferior in others; his vanity meets with continual rubs and disappointments, and disappointed vanity is very apt to degenerate into sullenness and pride. He despises, or affects to despise, his fellows, because, though superior in address, they are inferior in knowledge; and they in their turn, despise that knowledge which cannot teach the owner how to behave on the most common occasions. Thus he keeps at a distance from his equals, and they at a distance from him; mutual contempt is the natural consequence.

Another inconvenience attending private ed

tion is the suppressing of the principle of emulation, without which it rarely happens that a boy prosecutes his studies with alacrity or success. I have heard private tutors complain, that they were obliged to have recourse to flattery or bribery to engage the attention of their pupil; and I need not observe, how improper it is to set the example of such practices before children. True emulation, especially in young and ingenuous minds, is a noble principle; I have known the happiest effects produced by it; I never knew it to be productive of any vice. In all public schools, it is, or ought to be carefully cherished. Where it is wanting, in vain shall we preach up to children the dignity and utility of knowledge: the true appetite for knowledge is wanting; and, when that is the case, whatever is crammed into the memory will rather surfeit and enfeeble, than improve the understanding. I do not mention the pleasure which young people take in the company of one another, and what a pity it is to deprive them of it. I need not remark, that friendships of the utmost stability and importance have often been founded on school-acquaintance; nor need I put you in mind, of what vast consequence to health are the exercises and amusements which boys contrive for themselves. I shall only observe further, that when boys pursue their studies at home, they are apt to contract either a habit of idleness, or too close an attachment to reading: the former breeds innumerable diseases, both in the body and soul; the latter, by filling young and tender minds with more knowledge than they can either retain or arrange *properly, is apt to make them superficial and inattentive, or, what is worse, to strain, and conse-*

quently impair the faculties, by overstretching. I have known several instances of both. The mind is more improved by thoroughly mastering one science, one part of a science, one subject, than by a superficial knowledge of many sciences and a hundred different subjects. I would rather wish my son to be thorough of "Euclid's Elements," than to have a superficial knowledge of "Chambers's Dictionary" by heart.

The great inconvenience of public education is from its being dangerous to morals; in every condition and period of human life, it is a temptation. Nor will I deny, that our education during the first part of life, is much more at home than anywhere else; yet even at home we reach a certain age, it is not perfect. Let young men be kept at the greatest distance from bad company, it will not be easy to keep them from bad books, to which, in these days, all have easy access at all times. Let us suppose the best; that both bad books and bad company keep away, and that the young man leaves his parents' or tutor's side till he is well furnished with good principles, when he arrives at the age of reflection and temptation must come at last; and when they come, will they have the less strength? Are they new, unexpected, and surprising? The more the young man is surprised, the more apt will he be to lose his presence of mind, and consequently the less capable of self-control. Besides, if his passions are strong, he is more disposed to form comparisons between his present state of restraint and his present of liberty, and

ne former. His new associates
or his reserve and preciseness;
ance with their manners, and
t will render him the more ob-
dicule, will also disqualify him
supporting it with dignity, and
himself against it. Suppose him
a vice at its first appearance, and
ind the good precepts he received
yet when he sees others daily ad-
t without any apparent inconve-
e sees them more gay (to appear-
received among all their acquaint-
; and when he finds himself hooted
anner avoided and despised, on ac-
gularity,—it is a wonder, indeed, if
is first resolutions, and do not now
to think, that though his former
well-meaning people, they were by
lified to prescribe rules for his con-
world," he will say, "is changed since
ad you will not easily persuade young
t changes for the worse:) we must
he fashion, and live like other folks;
must give up all hopes of making a

And when he has got thus far, and
pise the opinions of his instructors,
atisfied with their conduct in regard
not add, that the worst consequences
asonably be apprehended. A young
himself at home, is never well known,
arents, because he is never placed in
tances which alone are able effectually
nterest his passions, and consequently

to make his character appear. His parents, or tutors, never know his weak sides; particular advices or cautions he stands in need of; whereas, if he had attended a school, and mingled in the amusements and pleasures of his equals, his virtues and his vices would be disclosing themselves every day, and he would have known what particular examples it was most expedient to imitate in himself. Compare those who have had a liberal education with those who have been educated in a school, and it will not be found, in fact, that the former are either in virtue or in talents, superior to the latter. I speak, madam, from observation of fact, and not from attending to the nature of the thing.

XXX. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 28th Jan.

IN preparing corrections and a preface to a second edition of my essay, I have laboured these two months, that I had time to do nothing else. The former were finished some time ago; and of the latter I have sent you a complete copy. I must beg of you, and of Mr. Arbuthnot, to set apart an hour as soon as possible, to revise this discourse, and let me know what you would wish to be changed or added. I will be entirely determined by your judgment; and I do not propose to come on this present occasion, with any other paper. You will be very free in your censures, and I do not wish to say any thing excepting what I think. At the same time, you will see, by the strain of

to express some things as clearly and possible, and to show that my zeal is not abated. The printing of the second briskly on.

TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 16th February, 1771.

Your power, my dear sir, or sir William Dr. Gregory's, to offend me on any of my remonstrances, on the present occasion my preface, are so far from offending consider them as a most striking instance of friendship; and, as such, I should esteem them a great deal of pleasure, unmixed with pain, if it were not for the trouble and anxiety which I know you must have felt on my account distressed, too, at the thought of having occupied so much of your time: Dr. Gregory, has too much cause to complain in this respect. As I well know the value of your time I will readily believe that I cannot be so unwise, when I reflect on my having been so long in writing a letter of twelve quarto pages. The only excuse I can say for myself is, that I did not wish to give my friends so much trouble; for, I thought of them my preface as I first wrote it, and thought of its imperfections on its head, and though I could object to several passages in it, I did not think nor wished them to do more than to point out the exceptionable parts with their advice would have fully satisfied me, as I had followed their advice implicitly in every

I hope I have, in my introduction, done to Mr. Hume as a man and as an historian tainly meant it at least. I have finished a of a new preface, (postscript I shall henceforth it;) it will be sent to sir William Forbes finished. You must once more take the trouble to read it over; I hope you will find nothing to add in it, for I struck out or altered every thing Gregory marked or objected to, and many besides. But lest there should still be a mistake or wrong, I will invest my friends with a discretionary power to expunge every thing they do not like.

XXXII. FROM DR. JOHN GREGORY.

Edinburgh, 20th November

I HAVE no objection to your marginal note. I think the reason of the warmth with which you write should be strongly pointed out, and as precisely as possible. It has been said here, that you had written with great heat and asperity against Mr. Hume, because you differed from him in some metaphysical subtleties, of no material consequence to mankind. This is alleged by persons who never read your book, and seem never to have read Mr. Hume's. You write with warmth against him because he has endeavoured to invalidate

* Respecting the "Essay on Truth." Dr. Gregory, professor of medicine in the university of Edinburgh, the author of several well-known literary papers.

† What the note here alluded to was, &c. It probably contained some remarks on the manuscript, then under consideration.

gument brought to prove the existence of a Supreme Being; because he has endeavoured to invalidate every argument in favour of a future state of existence; and because he has endeavoured to destroy the distinction between moral good and evil. You do not treat him with severity because he is a bad metaphysician, but because he has expressly applied his metaphysics to the above unworthy purposes. If he has not been guilty of this; if these are only conclusions which you yourself draw, by implication, from his writings, but conclusions which he himself disavows, then you are in the wrong; you ought to ask pardon of him and of the public, for your mistaken zeal. But I have never heard that he, or any of his friends, have pretended that you do him injustice in these respects. After all, I wish, for the future, that you would rather employ your wit and humour, of which you have so large a share, against these people, in the way that Addison, Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot did. It would mortify them beyond any thing that can be said against them in the way of reasoning.

**XXXIII. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE
DOWAGER LADY FORBES.***

Aberdeen, 12th October, 1772.

I WISH the merit of the "Minstrel" were such as would justify all the kind things you have said of it. That it has merit every body would think me a hypocrite if I were to deny; I am willing to believe that it has even considerable merit; and I acknow-

* Widow of the Right Hon. William lord Forbes.

with much gratitude, the public a reception far more than others I expected. There are in it many others, and perhaps there are some passages which others are more struck with than I am. In all poetry, this, I believe, is the case, more or less; but it is much more the case in poems of a sentimental cast such as the "Minstrel" is, than in those of a narrative species. In epic and dramatic poesy there is a standard acknowledged, by which we may mate the merit of the piece; whether the narrative be probable, and the characters well drawn and preserved; whether all the events be conducted such a way as to command perpetual attention the catastrophe; whether the action is unfolded in reading an epic poem or tragedy, ever undiminished curiosity—these are points, common to the art, may hold himself to be a competent judge of good sense, or tolerable knowledge of the art, and the general tenor of Common life, is the standard to which these facts, is the standard to which these facts are referred, and according to which they are estimated. But of sentimental poetry, I say there is no external standard. The reader must be the judge. He

former sort are those which Gray has so elegantly expressed in his "Church-yard Elegy," a poem which is universally understood and admired, not only for its poetical beauties, but also, and perhaps chiefly, for its expressing sentiments in which every man thinks himself interested, and which, at certain times, are familiar to all men. Now the sentiments expressed in the "Minstrel," being not common to all men, but peculiar to persons of a certain cast, cannot possibly be interesting, because the generality of readers will not understand nor feel them so thoroughly as to think them natural. That a boy should take pleasure in darkness or a storm, in the noise of thunder, or the glare of lightning; should be more gratified with listening to music at a distance, than with mixing in the merriment occasioned by it; should like better to see every bird and beast happy and free, than to exert his ingenuity in destroying or ensnaring them—these, and such like sentiments, which, I think, would be natural to persons of a certain cast, will, I know, be condemned as unnatural by others, who have never felt them in themselves, nor observed them in the generality of mankind. Of all this I was sufficiently aware before I published the "Minstrel," and, therefore, never expected that it would be a popular poem. Perhaps, too, the structure of the verse, (which, though agreeable to some, is not to all) and the scarcity of incidents, may contribute to make it less relished than it would have been, if the plan had been different in these particulars.

From the questions your ladyship is pleased to propose in the conclusion of your letter, as well as

I took pleasure, and
to those, of which, even
repeated experience. The
country, the ocean, the
tirement, and sometimes
ideas, had charms in me
schoolboy; and at a time
being able to express, the
own feelings, or perceive
suits and amusements
before I was ten years
the violin, and was as
Virgil, as Pope's and I
make me. But I am as
a subject so trifling as
Believe me, madam, no
commands could have it

proved since I left Scotland, is not so well established as to enable me to write a long letter; otherwise I have ten thousand things to tell you, in which I know you would be much interested. My spirits, which, when I came from home, were at the very lowest, are now raised again near to their usual pitch: for I have been as dissipated as possible of late, and have neither read nor written any thing (except now and then a very short letter) these two months. Indeed the physicians do expressly prohibit both.

I have been here five weeks, and shall probably continue a week or two longer. I have been extremely happy in making a great many very agreeable and very creditable acquaintance. Dr. Hawkesworth, Dr. Armstrong, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Samuel Johnson, and several others of note, have treated me, not only with politeness, but with a degree of attention and kindness that equals my warmest wishes. I wish I had longer time to pass among them; I shall find it no easy matter to force myself away. Johnson has been greatly misrepresented. I have passed several entire days with him, and found him extremely agreeable. The compliments he pays to my writings are so high, that I have not the face to mention them. Every body I have conversed with on the subject, (among whom I have the honour to reckon lord Mansfield) approves of what I have done in respect to Mr. Hume; and none of them have been able to find any personal abuse, any coarse expressions, or even any indelicacy, in what I have written against him: so, you see, I have *no great reason* to value what my

Scottish enemies say against me. This I mention to you, because I know it will give you pleasure.

A letter from Utrecht, which I received since it came here, informs me, that three translations of my Essay, a French, a Dutch, and a German, appear next winter. Some of them are now in the press.

XXXV. TO MRS. MONTAGU.*

I REJOICE to hear that Mr. Garrick is so well able to appear in tragedy. It is in vain to indulge one's self in unavailing complaints, other than I could rail by the hour at dame Fortune placing me beyond the reach of that arch-magician as Horace would have called him. I well remember, and I think can never forget, how he affected me in Macbeth, and made me almost forget myself over the front seat of the two-shilling gallery. I wish I had another opportunity of risking my neck and nerves in the same cause. To the hands of Garrick and Shakspeare would entrust my memory to all generations. To be serious, if all actors were like this one, I do not think it would be possible for a person of sensibility to live the representation of Hamlet, Lear, or Macbeth; which, by the bye, seems to suggest a reason for that mixture of comedy and tragedy, of which our great poet was so fond, and which the French critics think such an intolerable outrage.

* This letter is imperfect, and the date is wanting; it must have been written about this time.

against nature and decency. Against nature it is no outrage at all: the inferior officers of a court know little of what passes among kings and statesmen; and may be very merry, when their superiors are very sad; and if so, the porter's soliloquy in *Macbeth* may be a very just imitation of nature. And I can never accuse of indecency the man, who, by the introduction of a little unexpected merriment, saves me from a disordered head or a broken heart. If Shakspeare knew his own powers, he must have seen the necessity of tempering his tragic rage by a mixture of comic ridicule; otherwise there was some danger of his running into greater excesses than deer-stealing, by sporting with the lives of all the people of taste in these realms. Other playwrights must conduct their approaches to the human heart with the utmost circumspection; a single false step may make them lose a great deal of ground: but Shakspeare made his way to it at once, and could make his audience burst their sides this moment, and break their hearts the next. I have often seen *Hamlet* performed by the underlings of the theatre, but none of these seemed to understand what they were about. *Hamlet's* character, though perfectly natural, is so very uncommon, that few, even of our critics, can enter into it. Sorrow, indignation, revenge, and consciousness of his own irresolution, tear his heart; the peculiarity of his circumstances often obliges him to counterfeit madness, and the storm of passions within him often drives him to the verge of real madness. This produces a situation so interesting, and a conduct so complicated, as none but Shakspeare could have had the courage to describe,

or even to invent, and none but Garrick will ever be able to exhibit. Excuse this rambling : I know you like the subject ; and, for my part, I like it so much, that when I once get in, I am not willing to find my way out of it.

The book of second-sight has not, I fear, given you much entertainment.* The tales are ill-told and ill-chosen, and the language so barbarous as to be in many places unintelligible, even to a Scotsman. I have heard many better stories of the second-sight than any this author has given, attested by such persons, and accompanied by such circumstances, as to preclude contradiction, though not suspicion. All our Highlanders believe in the second-sight ; but the instances in which it is said to operate are generally so ambiguous, and the revelations supposed to be communicated by it so frivolous, that I cannot bring myself to acquiesce in it. Indeed this same historian has made me more incredulous than I was before ; for his whole book betrays an excess of folly and weakness. Were its revelations important, I should be less inclined to unbelief : but to suppose the Deity working a miracle, in order to announce a marriage, or the arrival of a poor stranger, or the making of a coffin, would require such evidence as has not yet attended any of these tales, and is indeed what scarce any kind of evidence could make one suppose. These communications are all made to the ignorant, the superstitious, and generally to the young ; I never heard of a man of learning, sense, or ob-

* Dr. Beattie had introduced a disquisition on the second sight into his " Essay on Poetry and Music."

servation, that was favoured with any of them ; a strong presumption against their credibility. I have been told, that the inhabitants of some parts of the Alps do also lay a claim to a sort of second-sight ; and I believe the same superstition, or something like it, may be found in many other countries, where the face of nature, and the solitary life of the natives, tend to impress the imagination with melancholy. The Highlands of Scotland are a picturesque, but gloomy region. Long tracts of solitary mountains covered with heath and rocks, and often obscured by mists ; narrow valleys, thinly inhabited, and bounded by precipices that resound for ever with the fall of torrents ; a soil so rugged, and a climate so dreary, as to admit neither the amusements of pasturage nor the cheerful toils of agriculture ; the mournful dashing of waves along the friths and lakes that every where intersect this country ; the portentous sounds which every change of the wind, and every increase and diminution of the waters, is apt to raise in a region full of rocks and hollow cliffs and caverns ; the grotesque and ghastly appearance of such a landscape, especially by the light of the moon ;—objects like these diffuse an habitual gloom over the fancy, and give it that romantic cast that disposes to invention, and that melancholy which inclines one to the fear of unseen things and unknown events. It is observable, too, that the ancient Scottish Highlanders had scarce any other way of supporting themselves than by hunting, fishing, or war ; professions that are continually exposed to the most fatal accidents. Thus, almost every circumstance in their lot tended to rouse and terrify the imagination. Accordingly,

their poetry is uniformly mournful; their music melancholy and dreadful, and their superstitions are all of the gloomy kind. The fairies confined their gambols to the Lowlands: the mountains were haunted with giants, and angry ghosts, and funeral processions, and other prodigies of direful import. That a people, beset with such real and imaginary bugbears, should fancy themselves dreaming, even when awake, of corpses, and graves, and coffins, and other terrible things, seems natural enough; but that their visions ever tended to any real or useful discovery, I am much inclined to doubt. Not that I mean to deny the existence of ghosts, or to call in question the accounts of extraordinary revelations granted to individuals, with which both history and tradition abound. But in all cases where such accounts are entitled to credit, or supported by tolerable evidence, it will be found that they referred to something which it concerned men to know; the overthrow of kingdoms, the death of great persons, the detection of atrocious crimes, or the preservation of important lives. But I take up too much of your time with these matters.

I have lately received another very kind letter from Mr. Mason, in which he gives me an account of all the poetical pieces which Mr. Gray has left unpublished. There is, 1. A Sonnet on the death of a friend, written 1742, of true Petrarchian pathos and delicacy. 2. Stanzas, in alternate rhyme, to Mr. Bentley, on the designs he made for his poems. 3. An Epitaph on Sir William Williams, who was killed at the siege of Belleisle; perfect in its kind. 4. The opening scene of a tragedy, called *Agrippina*, with the first speech of the second;

written much in Racine's manner, and with many masterly strokes. 5. An unfinished Address to Ignorance, in rhyme of ten syllables; satirical. 6. One hundred and seven lines, of the same measure with the former, of the beginning of an ethical Essay on Education and Government; finished, as far as it goes, in the highest manner: the most valuable piece he has left. 7. Six eight-lined stanzas of an Ode on the Vicissitude of the Seasons, nearly equal, in point of merit, (allowing for its being incomplete) with the Ode on Spring;—besides some translations, epigrams, and Latin poems. Mr. Mason obligingly offers me such of these pieces as I wish to see, and I have asked to see the 1. 3. 6. and 7. I heartily wish they may be printed, as they would tend to show the universality of Gray's genius.

XXXVI. FROM DR. PERCY.*

Northumberland-house, 27th May, 1772.

I LOSE no time in thanking you for your most obliging letter, and the very pleasing ballad that accompanied it. Such presents, when they fall in your way, will always be most acceptable, and very gratefully acknowledged.

I had also another reason for troubling you with so early an answer: it was to convey to you a copy of the enclosed sermons; wherein you will find very

* Afterwards bishop of Dromore, the editor of "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," to which the first part of this letter alludes.

warm but just acknowledgments for the you have done to the cause of truth. The of them is so much your admirer, that, knew I was writing to you, he desired m close a few lines from himself. If his character is not known to you, I must inf that Dr. Porteus is one of the brightest or of the church of England: he was chaplain bishop Secker, who left him one of the e to his will, and editor of his works, which since published. He is a man of the most and amiable manners, and most distinguis lties. The sermons here sent were preache the king, and procured the preacher a d reputation beyond that of any sermons pre my remembrance. The king and whole cou of nothing else for many days after; the qu sonally desired to peruse them afterward closet; and the duke of Northumberland, t at court till the Thursday after the last was preached, came home full of the acc heard from every mouth, of the impressio sermons had made in the Chapel Royal. you will perhaps think very extraordinar nevertheless, literally true, as I can testi own personal knowledge.

* The Rev. Dr. Porteus, afterwards bishop of I

XXXVII. FROM DR. PORTEUS.

Lambeth, 22d May, 1772.

THOUGH I have not the pleasure of being personally known to you, I take the liberty of requesting your acceptance of a small performance of mine, which Dr. Percy promises to convey to you. I have read, sir, with singular delight, both your poem called the "Minstrel," and your "Essay on Truth." It is a very uncommon thing to see so much true poetical invention, and such a talent for profound philosophical disquisition, united in the same person; and it is still more uncommon, to see such fine parts, especially in a layman, dedicated to the support of virtue and religion. I am not at all surprised to hear, that your spirited attack on the head-quarters of scepticism has drawn upon you the resentment of Mr. Hume and his followers. It is nothing more than might be expected; and, in the eyes of all impartial men, it is so far from being any reproach, that it is an honour to you. It shows that they feel the force of your arguments; for personal invective they cannot justly complain of. The keenness of your manly reproofs is directed, not against their persons, but their cause; and it falls far short of what such a cause deserves. But whatever unjust aspersions may be thrown upon you by your own countrymen, let this be your consolation, (if you need any) that in England your book has been received with universal applause. In the range of my acquaintance, which is pretty extensive, both among the clergy and the laity, I have never yet met with a single person, of true

taste and sound judgment, who did your essay in the warmest terms of In this they have always had my most currence; and I was glad of an opportunity giving some public testimony of my for your writings, as you will see I have note, which very honestly expresses sentiments, and says nothing more than is due.

The two sermons which I send you are the best return I could make, (though, I confess, a very inadequate one) for the good and instruction I have received from you. Give me leave only to add farther, that (which is contiguous to London) is my residence from the end of November to the end of June; and if either business or pleasure should bring you to the metropolis during the year, I shall be extremely glad to respect to you here, and to assure you of my affection. I am, sir, yours, &c.

XXXVIII. TO MRS. MONTAGU

Edinburgh, 6th

Your last letter, of the 5th June, reached me. I had been some days at Peterhead, endeavouring by the use of the medicinal waters of that place to shake off this hideous indisposition: but the water I did not receive half so much benefit from as the very agreeable accounts you gave me of your health and spirits. I congratulate you, myself, on your recovery, and I earnestly trust it will be permanent.

Your description of Tunbridge-wells is so very lively, that I think myself present in every part of it. I see your hills, your cattle, your carriages, your *beaux* and *belles* blended together in agreeable confusion. I am delighted while I sympathise with the feelings of those, whose imagination is refreshed and amused by the pleasing incongruities of the scene, and whose health and spirits are restored by the freshness of the air, and the virtues of the fountain. But what interests and delights me most of all, and more than words can express, is, that by the eye of fancy I behold you, madam, looking around on this scene with an aspect, in which all your native benignity, sprightliness, and harmony of soul are heightened with every decoration that health and cheerfulness can bestow.

I am greatly affected with your goodness and lord Lyttelton's, in urging my advancement with so much zeal and perseverance. After what lord Mansfield has done me the honour to declare in my favour, I cannot doubt but your friendly endeavours will at last prove successful. I now see that lord Mansfield wishes to establish me in Scotland; and, I am certain, that in this, as in other matters, his judgment is founded on the best reasons. I am greatly flattered by your kind invitation to Sandleford. I would not, for any consideration, forego the hope that I shall one time or other avail myself of it; but, at present, this is not in my power.

The second canto of the "Minstrel" is nearly finished, and has been so these two years; but, till my health be better established, I must not think of making any additions to it.

If you have not seen Dr. Porteus's two sermons,

lately published, I would recommend them to your notice, because they are, in my opinion, amongst the most elegant compositions of the kind in the English language. Dr. P. did me the honour to send me a copy of them, accompanied with a very kind, and very polite letter.

XXXIX. TO DR. PORTEUS.

Aberdeen, 18th August, 1772.

YOUR approbation of my weak endeavours in the cause of truth gives me the most sincere pleasure. How shall I thank you, sir, for having declared that approbation, so flattering to my ambition, and so favourable to my reputation and interest? Not satisfied with giving the public a favourable opinion of my late publication, and honouring my name with a place in your work, you wish to recommend me to the notice of royalty itself, and to give to my labours such a lustre as might attract those eyes, from which many would desire to hide all merit but their own. Be assured, sir, that I shall ever retain a just sense of your candour, good nature, and generosity; and that the encouragement I have received from you, and from your noble-minded countrymen, will serve as an additional motive to employ that health and leisure which Providence may hereafter allot me, in promoting, to the utmost of my poor abilities, the cause of truth, virtue, and mankind. This is the best return I can make to your goodness; for thus only can I, in any degree, approve myself worthy of it.

The "Essay on Truth," according to my original plan, is only the first part of a large treatise

that I had projected, on the evidences of morality and religion. I entered on my second part some years ago, and made a little progress in it. My intention there was to attempt a confutation of the errors which Hume, Helvetius, and other fashionable writers, had introduced into the moral sciences. The subject would have led me to the evidence of Christianity; and my own heart would have disposed, and my own conscience determined me to do justice to the characters and abilities of Voltaire, and other contemporary infidels, with the same freedom, and with the same spirit, that appear in what I have written against Hume's philosophy. But the wretched state of my health obliges me to suspend, for the present, all my literary projects. I hope, however, to get better in time; for I am told, that these nervous disorders are seldom fatal at my age.

I can never forget what I owe to the candour and humanity of the English nation. To have obtained the approbation and patronage of those who have so long been, and who will, I hope, continue to the latest ages to be, the patrons of truth, and the great assertors of the rights of mankind, is an honour, indeed, of which I feel the high value. While animated by this consideration, I can overlook, and almost forget, the opposition I have met with from a powerful party in this country, who, since the publication of the "Essay on Truth," have taken no little pains to render my condition as uneasy as possible. In other countries, infidels appear but as individuals; but in Scotland they form a party, whose principle is, to discountenance and bear down religion to the utmost of their power.

I am much obliged to you for speaking ably of the "Minstrel." When I first book, the greatest part of the section, and I hoped to have got the whole (intend only three books) within a year, that time my health has been quite unwell of every kind. When I go to London possibly be next summer, I will, with sure, avail myself of your kind invitation the first opportunity of paying my respects to Lambeth.

XL. TO MRS. MONTAGU

Aberdeen, 30th Sep

I HAVE never seen Mr. Jones's imitation Asiatic poetry. From what you say I am sure they will entertain me; though of your opinion, that, if they had been they would have been much more valuable more literal the better. Such things do not so much for the amusement of the fancy, as for the knowledge they give of the minds and manners of the people at which they are produced. To those who have eyes and are capable of observation, that expression and description will be more valuable which corresponds most exactly to their experience. I cannot sympathise with passages that are not felt; and, when objects are described in shapes, and proportions, quite unlike what have been accustomed to, I suspect that such comparisons are not just, and that it is not natural.

presented to my view, but the dreams of a man who had never studied nature.

What is the reason, madam, that the poetry, and, indeed, the whole phraseology, of the Eastern nations (and, I believe, the same thing holds of all uncultivated nations) is so full of glaring images, exaggerated metaphors, and gigantic descriptions? Is it, because that, in those countries where art has made little progress, nature shoots forth into wilder magnificence, and every thing appears to be constructed on a larger scale? Is it that the language, through defect of copiousness, is obliged to adopt metaphor and similitude, even for expressing the most obvious sentiments? Is it, that the ignorance and indolence of such people, unfriendly to liberty, disposes them to regard their governors as of supernatural dignity, and to decorate them with the most pompous and high-sounding titles, the frequent use of which comes at last to infect their whole conversation with bombast? Or is it, that the passions of those people are really stronger, and their climate more luxuriant? Perhaps all these causes may conspire in producing this effect. Certain it is, that Europe is much indebted, for her style and manner of composition, to her ancient authors, particularly to those of Greece, by whose example and authority that simple and natural diction was happily established, which all our best authors of succeeding times have been ambitious to imitate; but whence those ancient Greek authors derived it, whether from imitating other authors, still more ancient; or from the operation of physical causes; or from the nature of their language, particularly its unrivalled copiousness and flexibi-

lity; or from some unaccountable delicacy in their taste; or from the genius, that, conscious of its own vigour, all adventitious support, and all foreign aid it is not, perhaps, easy to determine.

The fourth edition of my *Essay* is in press.

XLI. FROM THE LORD ARCHBISHOP

Brodsworth, 19th Sept

As my brother, lord Kinnoull, has communicated to me your letter to him of 14th explaining your views, which certainly yet been answered with success commensurate to your talents, I desired him to communicate my thoughts, which, at least, are the result of a real friend and well-wisher, who has a high esteem of your merit in the cause of truth.

I doubt, whether you would be well satisfied with a lay-place, or a pension, or a residence in Scotland. As far as I can judge, the ministry in England would be the profession the most consistent with your qualifications and inclination, and the prospect of fair profit in it ought to be considered as a duty to yourself; and to your country. Give me leave, too, to say, that the duty, that is, to your conscience.

Though I was educated in the church, yet I have often sifted my mind with impartial reflection, and with as enlarged a view as I could take in, of the great dispensations of Providence.

• Dr. Drummond.

Deity, centering in Christ. Upon the whole, I have always thought, that the church of England is the most agreeable to Christian doctrine and discipline; equally distant from wild conceit and implicit faith; free, manly, and benevolent; conducive to the cause of truth and virtue, to the happiness of society, and of every individual in it; and it is the establishment that seems to carry the fairest aspect with it, towards promoting pure Christianity, and civil order; without overbearing, or artful, or abject means. With due Christian condescension to different opinions and modes, this is the result of frequent consideration and conviction, and is the testimony of my conscience. If it were otherwise, I would not, I could not, in honour, retain even the great emoluments with which I am favoured, for another moment.

It is, surely, unreasonable and unnecessary to trouble you with my notions. I allow it: but this is only a mode of flattering myself with the hopes that yours are similar. If such is your opinion of the church of England, and if it is your upright intention to exercise in its ministry your most valuable abilities and knowledge for the service of true religion, I shall think your entry into it a happy acquisition. And I would endeavour to contribute, as far as my scanty patronage goes, or my friendship and influence can extend, that you should enter into it with credit, and live in it with comfort.

Lord Kinnoull has written to lord Mansfield, and I shall talk with him after Christmas. I shall not leave my diocese till that time. I have written also to-day to our friend Mrs. Montagu.

XLII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 6th November, 17

I AM happy to find, that the plan I have just now view is honoured with your approbation. It is the result of the most mature deliberation; and I shall never have occasion to repent it. What my present views shall prove successful, is a very uncertain. I shall endeavour, by moderating my hopes and my wishes, to prepare myself for the worst.

You do too much honour to the letter I wrote the archbishop of York. It contained nothing that could entertain you. Some time or other I will give you, at large, my opinion of the matters contained in it; for of the letter itself I kept no copy. It has pleased his grace, and given great satisfaction to lord Kinnoull.

Dr. Gregory will show you the character of Rousseau, as it is now finished. Some years ago I should have put more panegyric in it, and less satire; but since that time, I have had leisure to examine some of his theological, and some, to his philosophical tenets, which has lowered considerably my opinion of his candour and understanding: but my admiration of his talents, as an eloquent and pathetic writer, still remains unimpaired; and I am confident he had originally in him, which might have made him one of the greatest philosophers in the world, if his genius had not been perverted by the fashion of the times by the love of paradox. The passage I allude

where he speaks so well of the genius of Christianity, and the character of its Divine Founder, is in the creed of the Savoyard curate, where he draws a comparison between Jesus Christ and Socrates.

XLIII. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 12th January, 1773.

It gave me the most sincere pleasure to find that the archbishop of York was satisfied with the sentiments expressed in the letter I had the honour to write to him. His grace sent my letter to lord Kinnoull, who was pleased to write to me on the occasion, and to express his approbation in very strong terms. Considering the turn that my affairs were likely to take, I wished for an opportunity of doing myself justice, by explaining my opinion of the doctrine and discipline of the church of England; and a more favourable opportunity could not have been wished for, than that which his grace was pleased to grant me. I am much honoured by your application in my behalf to the duchess of Portland, and deeply sensible of the importance of her grace's interest and favourable opinion.

In the new edition of my "Essay," I have inserted a long note, containing a character of Rousseau and his writings. This I did by the advice of Dr. Gregory, who told me, that many persons, who wished me well, had signified to him their desire of knowing my reasons for thinking so favourably of that philosopher; as to place his name in the same list with Bacon, Shakspeare, and Montesquieu. I was somewhat afraid, lest, by bestowing on Rousseau those praises which, I think, are his

due, I might offend some well-meaning persons who had read only those parts of his works which expressed his dissatisfaction with some parts of the Christian doctrine : and, therefore, when I sent it to Dr. Gregory, I desired him to consider it seriously, and, if he thought it would do any harm to any Christian, or tend to embroil the church in controversy, to suppress it altogether. He, however, suppressing it, he forwarded it to the printer, who afterwards wrote to me that he enclosed it. I long to know your opinion of it, and have, therefore, desired Mr. D. to send it to you. The book. There is at page 330, a chapter intended to expose some of Voltaire's notions on the subject of necessity. These are notions of any consequence that are new to the English impression.

Mr. Dilly will also send you a copy of a letter addressed to Mrs. Carter, which I have written, I am sure, you will take the trouble to read. I have written with some apology, to make it acceptable, and to contribute of respect and gratitude which is due to the extraordinary genius and virtue, and to the pure and instruction I have received from your writings.

I am greatly delighted with your views on the causes that produced the striking difference which appears in the poetical style of Greece and Rome, compared with the style of the East and the oriental. You have, in my opinion, done very well for this diversity. It is a great pity that we have a little of Homer's history, and of the Greek literature before his time. We have not that the records of Greece have not

the Trojan war; for it is observable, that of Homer's heroes are descended from Jupiter the third or fourth degree only; in other words, that they could not trace their genealogy farther than the third or fourth generation; which is a proof, or at least, a presumption, that they were illiterate, and had but lately emerged from barbarity. Horace makes the contemporaries of Theseus and Amphion to have been perfect savages, humanized by the charms of poetry and music: perhaps, he spoke only from conjectures, gathered out of the fables of those ancient times. If conjectures be just; if the Greeks were really in a state of barbarity and ignorance, so late as the third or fourth generation before the Trojan war; it is a matter of astonishment, that, in Homer's time (about 150 years after that war,) their language should be so copious, so regular, so harmonious, so subtle in the discrimination of thought, so wonderfully diversified in its inflections. If we did not know the thing to be impossible, we should be tempted to think that the Greek language had been the invention of philosophers: if it is, like other languages, from vulgar and accidental use, and yet came, in so short time, to such perfection, we cannot help thinking that the Greeks received from nature superior force of genius, delicacy of taste; and that Horace spoke as a philosopher as well as a poet, when he said, *ingenium, Græcis dedit ore rotundo Musa*

XLIV. TO SIR WILLIAM FORB

Aberdeen, 13th Feb

I AM deeply sensible of your goodness, in cating to me, in so tender and soothing the news of a misfortune, which is, in the severest I have ever felt.* For months past, my spirits have been unpressed, so that I am but ill prepared for a stroke. Of the loss which society, and family have received; of the income which I sustain, by the death of this son, I can say nothing; my heart is to have not yet recovered myself so far as speak coherently on this or any other subject.

You justly observe, that his friends no small consolation, from the circumstance death having been without pain, and from grounded hope we may entertain of made a happy change. But I find I cannot I thought I should have been able to give of my thoughts on this occasion; but overpowers me. Write to me as soon, as you can, of the situation of his family ever you may think I should wish to know endeavour to follow your kind advice, and to relieve myself to this great affliction, as much as possible. My reason, I trust, is fully and thoroughly convinced that every dispo-

* The death of Dr. Gregory. He was found probably from an attack of the gout, to which he was subject.

Providence is wise and good ; and that by making a proper improvement of the evils of this life, we may convert them all into blessings. It becomes us, therefore, to adore the Supreme Benefactor when he takes away, as well as when he gives ; for he is wise and beneficent in both.

XLV. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 3d May, 1773.

I HAVE just now finished the business of a melancholy winter. When I wrote to you last, which was in January, my health and spirits were in a very low state. In this condition, the unexpected death of the best of men and of friends, came upon me with a weight, which at any time I should have thought almost unsupportable, but which, at that time, was afflicting to a degree which human abilities alone could never have endured. But Providence, ever beneficent and gracious, has supported me under this heavy dispensation ; and, I hope, I shall, in time, be enabled to review it, even with that cheerful submission which becomes a Christian, and which none but a Christian can entertain. I have a thousand things to say on this most affecting subject ; but for your sake, madam, and for my own, I shall not, at present, enter upon them. Nobody can be more sensible than you are, of the irreparable loss which not only his own family and friends, but which society in general, sustains by the loss of this excellent person : and I need not tell you, (for of this too I know you are sensible,) that of all his friends, (his own family excepted,)

none has so much cause of sorrow, on this occasion, as I. I should never have done, if I were to enter into the particulars of his kindness to me. For these many years past, I have had the happiness to be of his intimate acquaintance. He took part in all my concerns; and, as I concealed nothing from him, he knew my heart and my character as well as I myself did; only the partiality of his friendship made him think more favourably of me than I deserved. In all my difficulties, I applied to him for advice and comfort; both which he had the art of communicating in such a way as never failed to compose and strengthen my mind. His zeal in promoting my interest and reputation is very generally known. In a word, (for I must endeavour to quit a subject, which will long be oppressive to my heart,) my inward quiet and external prosperity were objects of his particular and unwearied care, and he never missed any opportunity of promoting both to the utmost of his power. I wrote to his son soon after the fatal event; and have had the comfort to hear from several hands that he, and his sisters, and the whole family, have with a propriety that charms every body. continuing his father's lectures, he acquits himself to universal satisfaction.

XLVI. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 21st April, 1

A BOOK has been lately published, which makes little noise in this country. It is an "Essay on the Origin and Progress of Language;" the au

Mr. Burnet of Monboddo,* one of the lords of the session, a man of great learning, but rather too much devoted to Greek literature, particularly the metaphysical philosophy. In the first part of his work gives a very learned, elaborate, and abstruse account of the origin of ideas, according to the metaphysics of Plato, and the commentators upon Aristotle. He then treats of the origin of human society, and of language (which he considers as a human invention,) in the way in which many of our honorable philosophers have treated of them of late; representing men as having originally been, and continued for many ages to be, no better than brutes, and indeed in many respects worse; destitute of speech, of reason, of conscience, of social affection, and of every thing that can confer dignity upon a creature, and possessed of nothing but external sense and memory, and a capacity of improvement. The system is not a new one: it is borrowed (whatever these philosophers may pretend) from Epicurus, or rather from Lucretius, of whose account of it, Horace gives a pretty exact judgement, in these lines: *Cum prorepserunt prius animalia terris, mutum et turpe pecus, &c.* which lord Monboddo takes for his motto, and which, he says, comprehend, in miniature, the whole history of man. In regard to facts that make up his system (all which our author sees with microscopic eyes,) he is amazingly credulous, and totally blind and sceptical in regard to every fact of an opposite tendency. He professes a regard for

* One of the judges of the supreme court of law in Scotland, by the title of lord Monboddo.

I have been entertained
by it; but notwithstanding
regard for the author
and to whom I am u
take it up as a task, a
an hour in it at a tin
picture he gives of the
shocks me, as if I wer
a putrid carcase. It i
believe, will do little I
abstruse and too learn
his readers will be m
to conviction, when th
does with the utmost
the ouran-outangs are
bay of Bengal exists a
with tails, discovered
skipper; that the beav
and political animals,
neither social nor politi
son, reflection, a sense

tion at least, that if men had ever been a *mutum turpe pecus*, they must, without supernatural assistance, have continued so to this day; that therefore man, in all ages from the beginning, must have been a speaking animal; that the first man must have received the divine gift of language from himself, by inspiration; and that the children of our first parents, and their descendants to the present time, must have learned to speak by imitation and instruction. And for the smaller diversities in kindred language (such as those which took place in the French language, for instance, compared with the Italian and Spanish,) I would account from the revolutions of human affairs, and the tendency of language to alteration; and for the greater diversities, (such as those that appear in the European languages, compared with those of China, America, &c.) I would account from the confusion of Babel; nor do I think it possible to account for them satisfactorily in any other way.

XLVII. TO DR. PORTEUS.

London, 23d July, 1773.

I HAVE been very much hurried of late by a variety of interesting matters, otherwise I should have sooner acknowledged the receipt of your most obliging letter of the 1st of July. The many favours I have had the honour to receive at your hands, excite me with the most lively gratitude, which I could fain attempt to express in words, but find, after repeated trials, that I cannot. All, therefore, that I shall now say on this subject is, that I shall ever cherish a most grateful remembrance of them.

power—that London is
exerting them in. (C
power—to employ, in
shall allot me, those in
which may fall to my
utmost of my poor a
virtue, and mankind.
thing good in this wa
pletely gratified, and
to think, that I am not
kindness and attention
you, sir,, and from ot
countrymen.

You have heard, per
at the late installation
quence of a letter fro
The university did me
unanimous, not only in
also ordering that it sh
all expense.

I have not seen the

has told it. I am very apt to be distrustful of our modern travellers, when I find them, after a three months' residence in a country of whose language they know next to nothing, explaining the moral and religious notions of the people, in such a way as to favour the licentious theories of the age. I give them full credit for what they tell us of plants, and minerals, and winds, and tides; those things are obvious enough, and no knowledge of strange language is necessary to make one understand them: but as the morality of actions depends on the motives that give rise to them; and as it is impossible to understand the motives and principles of national customs, unless you thoroughly understand the language of the people, I should suspect that not one in ten thousand of our ordinary travellers is qualified to decide upon the moral sentiments of a new discovered country. There is not one French author of my acquaintance that seems to have any tolerable knowledge of the English government, or of the character of the English nation: they ascribe to us sentiments which we never entertained; they draw, from our ordinary behaviour, conclusions directly contrary to truth;—how then is it to be supposed that Mr. Banks and Mr. Solander could understand the customs, the religion, government, and morals, of the people of Otaheite?

Dr. Hawkesworth, in his preface, has given an account of Providence, which, in spite of all my partiality in his favour, I cannot help thinking indefensible. But I need not say any thing on this subject, as you must have seen the whole passage in

the newspapers. When my affairs are determined, which I hope will be soon, I shall take the liberty to write to you again.

XLVIII. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

London, 21st August, 1773.

I HAVE at last received a letter from Mr. Robinson,* dated yesterday, in which he tells me, "that he is desired by lord North to inform me, that his majesty has been pleased to consent that a pension be paid me of two hundred pounds a-year." Mr. Robinson says, he will order the warrant to be made out for me immediately, and desires me to call for it at the treasury; which I shall do on Monday.

And now, madam, allow me to congratulate you on the happy conclusion of this affair; for sure I am, you will take as much pleasure in it as I do. You may believe, I shall never forget from whom this long series of applications took its rise. But I shall not at present enter on this subject. I fear it will not be in my power to set out for Sandleford till towards the end of the week, as I have the warrant to get from the treasury, the court to attend, and a multitude of letters to write, to the archbishop of York, lord Kinnoull, sir Adolphus Oughton, lord North, &c. &c. As soon as I can possibly fix a time for setting out, I will write to you. Meantime, I beg to hear some account of your health.

* At that time secretary of the treasury.

It is very good in you, madam, to flatter me with the hopes that still better things may be in reserve for me. But I assure you, I think myself rewarded above my deservings, and shall most willingly sit down contented—not to eat, or drink, or be idle; but to make such a use of the goodness of Providence, and his majesty's bounty, as the public has a right to require of me. What I have now got, added to the emoluments of my present office, will enable me to live independently and comfortably in Scotland, and to cultivate those connexions and friendships in England, which do me so much honour. But more of this when I have the happiness to see you.

I am ashamed to send you so shabby a letter, all made up of shreds and patches. It is by mistake, owing to hurry, that I write on so many bits of paper; but as the post is just going out, I have no time to transcribe; and I would not keep back this intelligence for a single day.

I have another piece of news to tell you, which will give you pleasure. Sir Joshua Reynolds, with whom I formerly told you that I have the happiness to be particularly acquainted, and whose talents, both as a painter, and as a critic and philosopher, I take to be of the very first rate, has planned out a sort of allegorical picture, representing the triumph of truth over scepticism and infidelity. At one corner of the picture, in the foreground, stands your humble servant, as large as life, arrayed in a doctor of laws' gown and band, with his "Essay on Truth" under his arm. At some little distance appears Truth, habited as an angel, with a sun on her breast, who is to act such a part

with respect to the sceptic and infidel, as shall show, that they are not willing to see the light, though they have the opportunity. My face (for which I sat) is finished, and is a most striking likeness; only, I believe, it will be allowed, that sir Joshua is more liberal in the articles of spirit and elegance than his friend Nature thought proper to be. The angel also is finished, and is an admirable figure: and sir Joshua is determined to complete the whole with all expedition, and to have a print done from it. He is very happy in this invention, which is entirely his own. Indeed, if I had been qualified to give any hints on the subject (which is not at all the case,) you will readily believe, that I would not be instrumental in forwarding a work that is so very flattering to me. The picture will appear at the Exhibition; but whether sir Joshua means to keep it, or dispose of it, is not, I believe, determined.

XLIX. TO THE EARL OF KINNOULL.

London, 29th August, 1773.

Mrs. Montagu's state of health is very indifferent; she complains of a feverish disorder, which has haunted her the greatest part of the summer. She is greatly afflicted at the death of our great and good friend, lord Lyttelton. This event was unexpected; it is little better than a fortnight since I received a very kind letter from him. The loss to his friends and to society, is unspeakable and irreparable; to himself his death is infinite gain; for whether we consider what he felt here, or what he hoped for hereafter we must admit that no man

ever had more reason to wish for a dismissal from the evils of this transitory life. His lordship died, as he lived, a most illustrious example of every Christian virtue. His last breath was spent in comforting and instructing his friends. "Be good and virtuous," said he to lord Valentia,* "for know that to this you must come." The devout and cheerful resignation that occupied his mind during his illness, did not forsake him in the moment of dissolution, but fixed a smile on his lifeless countenance. I sincerely sympathise with your lordship on the loss of this excellent man. Since I came last to town, I have had the honour and happiness to pass many an hour in his company, and to converse with him on all subjects: and I hope I shall be the better, while I live, for what I have seen, and what I have heard, of lord Lyttelton.

L. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 15th October, 1773.

I PURPOSELY delayed for a few days to answer your letter, that I might be at leisure to think seriously, before I should venture to give my opinion in regard to the important matter about which you did me the honour to consult me. A religious education is indeed the greatest of all earthly blessings to a young man; especially in these days, when one is in such danger of receiving impressions of a contrary tendency. I hope, and earnestly wish, that this, and every other blessing, may be the lot of

* His son-in-law.

your nephew, who seems to be accomplished and promising, far beyond his years.

I must confess, I am strongly prepossessed in favour of that mode of education that takes place in the English universities. I am well aware, at the same time, that in those seminaries, there are, to some young men, many more temptations to idleness and dissipation, than in our colleges in Scotland; but there are also, if I mistake not, better opportunities of study to a studious young man, and the advantages of a more respectable and more polite society to such as are discreet and sober. The most valuable parts of human literature, (I mean the Greek and Latin classics) are not so completely taught in Scotland as in England; and I fear it is no advantage (I have sometimes known it a misfortune) to those young men of distinction that come to study with us, that they find too easy and too favourable an admittance to balls, assemblies, and other diversions of a like kind, where the fashion not only permits, but requires, that particular attention be paid to the younger part of the female world. A youth of fortune, with the English language and English address, soon becomes an object of consideration to a raw girl; and equally so, perhaps, though not altogether on the same account, to her parents. Our long vacations too, in the colleges in Scotland, though a convenience to the native student, (who commonly spends those intervals at home with his parents) are often dangerous to the students from England; who being then set free from the restraints of academical discipline, and at a distance from their parents or

guardians, are too apt to forget, that it was for the purpose of study, not of amusement, they were sent into this country.

All or most of these inconveniences, may be avoided at an English university, provided a youth have a discreet tutor, and be himself of a sober and studious disposition. There classical erudition receives all the attentions and honours it can claim; and there the French philosophy, of course, is seldom held in very high estimation; there, at present, a regard to religion is fashionable; there, the recluseness of a college-life, the wholesome severities of academical discipline, the authority of the university, and several other circumstances I could mention, prove very powerful restraints to such of the youth as have any sense of true honour, or any regard to their real interest.

We, in Scotland, boast of our professors, that they give regular lectures in all the sciences, which the students are obliged to attend; a part of literary economy which is but little attended to in the universities of England. But I will venture to affirm, from experience, that if a professor does no more than deliver a set of lectures, his young audience will be little the wiser for having attended him. The most profitable part of my time is that which I employ in examinations, or in Socratical dialogue with my pupils, or in commenting upon ancient authors; all which may be done by a tutor in a private apartment, as well as by a professor in a public school. Lectures indeed I do, and must give, in order to add solemnity to the truths I would inculcate; and partly too, in compliance with the fashion, and for the sake of my own cha-

racter; (for this, though not the most of our business, is that which shows most advantage,) but I have also other methods, particularly the Socratic dialogue, much more effectual in attention and improving the faculties of the student.

I will not, madam, detain you long by comparison: it is my duty to give you some sentiments, and you will be able to draw from these imperfect hints. If it should be that your nephew shall be sent to Scotland, he may, I believe, have as good an opportunity for improvement at Edinburgh or Glasgow as at any other: if the law is to form a part of his studies, he ought, by all means, to go to one of these places; as we have no such opportunity in any other part of this kingdom, except the King's college, Aberdeen, whose office is a sinecure for several generations. If he should make choice of Edinburgh or Glasgow, I am at a loss to say: I was formerly acquainted with the professors of both colleges, but *tempora mutantur*. Dr. Blair learned, ingenious, and worthy minister; they are both clergymen; and as I am confident, your nephew might lodge comfortably with either. Whether they will accept of the office of tutor to any young man, they themselves only can determine; but I suppose they would decline it, on account of the business of their office: it is partly on this account, chiefly on account of my health, that I am obliged to decline every offer of this

LI. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.*

Aberdeen, 22d October, 1773.

THE late arrival of the post yesterday put it out of my power to answer your most obliging letter in season. I shall not, at present, attempt to tell you (indeed I could not) how much my heart is touched by the many kind and generous expressions of friendship contained in your excellent letter; to be honoured with so great a share of the esteem and affections of such persons as you, is surely of all earthly blessings the greatest. But I shall proceed to business, without further preamble.

Some years ago, I should have thought myself a very great gainer, by exchanging my present office with a professorship in the university of Edinburgh. Such an event would have doubled my income, without subjecting me to one half of the labour which I now undergo. But those were only secondary considerations. My attachment to Edinburgh arose, chiefly, from my liking to the people; and surely it was natural enough for me to love a place, in which I had, and still have, some of the dearest and best friends that ever man was blessed with. Nor had I then any reason to fear that either my principles or the general tenor of my conduct could ever raise me enemies in any Christian society; it having been, ever since I had anything to do in the world, my constant purpose to

* The following letter relates to the professorship of Natural and Experimental Philosophy in the university of Edinburgh, for which it was recommended to Dr. Beattie to become a candidate.

do my duty, and promote peace ; and a good fortune, to obtain from all who share of esteem and regard, equal to and greater than my deservings. Nor, are my affections to Edinburgh at all. I am still known to some members of the university, whose talents and whose virtues the highest estimation, and with whose account it my honour to be more nearly and the favours I have received from persons of distinction in the place, demand hearty acknowledgments, and shall be cherished in my remembrance, with ever that the warmest gratitude can inspire.

And yet, my dear friend, there are those of no small moment, which deter me from giving up all thoughts of appearing as a candidate at the present occasion ; and which would deter me from going to this, even though I were absolute being elected. Nay, though my fortune is now as it lately was, I should rather to remain in quiet where I am, than coming a member of the university of Edinburgh to place myself within the reach of those (they are) who have been pleased to let me know that they do not wish me well, and have any reason to mind their enmity, and its consequences. They must not flatter me that they have ever been able as yet to overcome my moment's uneasiness, notwithstanding the calumny which they have spoken against me. I am so good, that he who espouses it can never have occasion to be afraid of any man. I know my talents, and I am not ignorant of their

(God knows) think highly of the former, indeed I have no reason; but I am under no sort of apprehension in regard to the latter; and as to the esteem of others, I have no fear of losing it, so long as I do nothing to render me unworthy of it. But I am so great a lover of peace, and so willing to think well of all my neighbours, that I do not wish to be connected even with one person who dislikes me.

Had I ever injured the persons whom I allude to, I might have hoped to regain their favour by submission (which, in that case, would have become me,) and by a change of conduct. But, as they are singular enough to hate me for having done my duty, and for what, I trust (with God's help,) I shall never cease to do; (I mean, for endeavouring to vindicate the cause of truth with that zeal which so important a cause requires,) I could never hope that they would live with me on those agreeable terms, on which I desire to live with all good men, and on which, by the blessing of Providence, I have the honour and the happiness to live with so great a number of the most respectable persons of this age.

I must, therefore, my dear friend, make it my request to you, that you would, in better terms than any I can suggest, in terms of the most ardent gratitude and most zealous attachment, return my best thanks to the gentlemen of your council, for the very great honour they have been pleased to confer upon me; and tell them, that the city and university of Edinburgh shall ever have my sincerest good wishes, and that it will be the study of my life to act such a part, as may, in some measure,

justify their good opinion; but that
veral weighty reasons, decline ap-
date for the present vacant profess-

LHI. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES

Aberdeen, 1

I HAVE just received your two let-
current, enclosing two from lord
which, according to your desire,
this cover. I cannot sufficiently th-
lordship, for your zealous good-will
very favourable opinion you and he
entertain of me. As I desire not
nearly than to secure the continu-
vourable opinion, I must beg leave
particular in answering two accu-
from two passages of his lordship
reason to fear are likely to be brow-
even by my friends. It is insinuate
inclination to resign my present e-
be the effect of *obstinacy* or of *fear*.

Now, I humbly think, that whe-
duct, and the reasons of it, are ap-
great majority of those who are
both, it would be rather hard to c-
obstinacy for adhering to such cond-
certain it is, that, by all my English

* Sir William Forbes had received two
Hallas, one of the judges of the supreme
criminal law of Scotland, urging him to
Beattie to allow himself to be proposed
the vacant professorship. These letters
enclosed to Dr. Beattie.

I have had occasion to explain the affair in question, and by many respectable friends in Scotland, this conduct of mine, and the reasons of it, have been highly approved. Another thing, too, on this head, deserves attention. A man should not be accused of obstinacy, till he have told *all* his reasons, and till it appear that they are *all* unsatisfactory. I have never told *all* my reasons: I have told those only which are of a less private nature: other reasons I could specify; but they are of such a sort, that I should think it petulance to obtrude them on the public.

To the second accusation, I know not whether I can decently reply. When I see a man solicitous to prove that he is sober, I generally take it for granted that he is drunk; and when one is at pains to convince me that he is brave, I am apt to set him down for a coward. Whether I deserve to be considered as a timorous assertor of good principles, I leave the world to judge, from what I have written, and from what I have done and said on occasions innumerable. Many hundreds in Great Britain, and some too elsewhere, think that no Scottish writer, in my time, has attacked the enemies of truth with less reserve, and confuted them more zealously, than I have done. I have declared, in a printed book, which bears my name, that I detest their principles and despise their talents; and that very book is, in the opinion of many, a proof that I have no reason to retract the declaration. What I have avowed, I am still ready to avow, in the face of any man upon earth, or of any number of men; and I shall never cease to avow, in plain language, and without concealment or sub-

terfuge, so long as the Deity is pleased to with me the use of my faculties. I care that my friends will treat me so hardly, but that I fear every thing which I dislike like the croaking of frogs and the barking of dogs, but I fear neither. I dislike the conversation of infidels; but I know not in what sense said to fear it. I should dislike very much to be in a society with crafty persons, who would use it for their interest to give me as much trouble as possible, unless I had reason to think that my conscience and honour sufficient to resist from aspersing the innocent; yet, if my friends should call me thither, I should not be in the least afraid to live in such a society; for I know that while an honest man does his duty, the world will do him justice. As to *obloquy*, I have had a share of it, as large as any private man knows; and I think I have borne it, and can bear it with a degree of fortitude, of which I should need to be ashamed, even if my station were less public and as important as that of a judge. An honest man, whether his station be public or private, will do his duty without minding calumny, which, in fact, was never more harmless than at present, because it never was more common. I convince me that it is my duty to remove from Edinburgh, and you shall see me set off immediately, as regardless of the snarling of my enemies there, as of that of the curs who might bite my heels by the way. So very little ground I have for suspecting me of an inclination to *shrink* from my principles, that one chief reason which induces my present choice is, that I may have the

sure to apply myself to those studies, which may tend to the farther confutation of error and illustration of truth : so that, if they think I have any talents in this way, and if they know what my present resolutions are, my adversaries would wish me rather in Edinburgh, where I should have but little leisure, than at Aberdeen, where I have a great deal. On this account, as well as on others, I am morally certain, that I shall have it in my power to do more good to society by remaining where I am, than by moving to Edinburgh.

That I am entirely useless in my present profession, is not the opinion of those in this country, who have access to know how I employ myself. My lectures are not confined to my own class. I do what no other professor here ever did, and what no professor in any other part of Great Britain can do; I admit, together with my own students in moral philosophy, all the divinity students of two universities, who are willing to attend me; and I have often a very crowded auditory; and I receive fees from nobody, but from such of my own private class as are able to pay them. Nobody ever asked me to do this, and nobody thanks me for it, except the young men themselves; and yet, in all this there is so little merit, (it being as easy for me to lecture to a hundred as to thirty) that I should not have thought it worth mentioning, except with a view to obviate an objection that seems to be implied in some things that have been thrown out at this time.

So much for my duties to the public, to which, I would fain hope, it will be found, that I am not quite insensible. But, according to my notions of

morality, there are also duties which a man owes to his family and to himself: nor is it, in my opinion, incumbent on any man to overlook the latter, merely because it is possible, that, by so doing, he might discharge the former more effectually. I do not think it the duty of any particular Christian, of you, for instance, or Mr. Arbuthnot, or myself, to relinquish his family, friends, and country, and to attempt the conversion of the Indians; and yet, it is not absolutely impossible, but that, by so doing, he might perform a great deal of good. My health and quiet may be of little consequence to the public, but they are of very considerable consequence to me, and to those who depend upon me; and I am certain, that I shall have a much better chance of securing both, by staying where I am, than by removing to Edinburgh. Dr. Gregory was of this opinion; I can show his hand-writing for it; and this is the opinion of many others. I have more reasons than the world knows of, to wish to pass the latter part of my days in quiet: and the more quiet, and the more health I enjoy, the more I shall have it in my power to exert myself in the service of the public.

To what lord Hailes adds, in the conclusion of his letter, about my leaving the office in question if I found it disagreeable, in the hopes of finding some decent retirement elsewhere, I make no reply: I only say, that I wonder at it. I wish there were more foundation for his humorous conjecture about my food; if I could eat vegetables, I should think myself a great man; but, alas! the state of *my health* is such, that I dare not indulge myself in *that wholesome diet*.

I hope his lordship will now be convinced that I am neither whimsical nor timorous in this affair. The reasons I have specified have been admitted as valid by many persons, whose judgment in other matters he would allow to be good, if I were to name them; which I would do, without scruple, if I thought it necessary.

I shall only add, what you, my dear friend, know to be a truth, and what I can bring the fullest evidence to prove, that my present disinclination to an Edinburgh professorship is not the consequence of any late favourable change in my circumstances. The very same disinclination I showed, and the same reasons I urged, more than two years ago, when I had no prospect of such a favourable change.

To conclude; every principle of public and private duty forbids me to comply with this kind solicitation of my friends; and I will add, that nothing but a regard to duty could have determined me to resist so kind a solicitation. I am certain, the city of Edinburgh can find no difficulty in procuring an abler professor than I am. I heartily wish it may ever flourish in learning, and in every useful and honourable art; and I shall ever retain a most grateful sense of the honour which so many of its inhabitants have done me on this occasion.

I ask pardon for not answering your letter sooner. My health is just now in such a state (the confinement, occasioned by my broken arm, having brought back many of my old complaints,) that I am not able to write more than a few sentences at a time, *without suffering for it.*

I have not said a word on the subject of interest.

It is evident to me, and I think I your satisfaction, that the change would be detrimental in that reconsideration should not deter me from change, if my duty required me to yet, even if I were to pay *some* at est in an affair of this kind, I do the world in general would blame that I have others to provide for. It may be said, indeed, that, having as much as might support me in my office, which is more than I deserve, right to extend my views to interests I admit the fact, but I deny the inference. I will not believe any man to be shown me, by his own conduct, to be valid.

The reasons I have here specified as generally known, in and about you may think necessary, for the value of my character.

LIII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES

Aberdeen,

THE long letter, enclosed, you are to answer, not to yours, but to those of mine. I know, not only the goodness and generosity and gentleness of your heart, but I am sure, you would never wish me to be disagreeable to me, if I could, with a view to avoid it. Our learned and worthy

• The preceding letter was enclosed in

think, that my interest and gratification ought to be entirely out of the question: in this, I know, you will differ from him, as well as in some insinuations touching my character, which, I confess, pique me a little. But this *entre nous*. I have the greatest regard for him, notwithstanding, on account of his learning and worth; and I am pretty certain he has a regard for me; but I thought it was best to speak plain, and put an end to the affair at once. Be assured, that I did not form my present resolution without very good reason.

LIV. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 18th December, 1773.

My studies proceed so slowly, that I can hardly be said to study at all; which, after what I have told you, will not appear surprising. I have, however, added largely to my discourse on classical learning, and have been looking out for materials towards the finishing of my other little essays. If the subscription-affair succeed, I hope I shall have every thing in readiness in due time. I understand, by a letter from Mr. Gregory to one of his friends here, that he has been obliged to lay aside the scheme of publishing his father's works in one volume; two of the treatises being (it seems) the property of Dodsley the bookseller: this has made me postpone, to a time of more leisure, what I intended to write on the subject of the doctor's character. I knew that Mr. Gregory* would please you: he is, indeed,

* Eldest son of the late Dr. John Gregory. He afterwards was professor of the practice of physic in the university of Edinburgh.

Mrs. Beattie and me; but as
thing of it, we are satisfied that it
over.

It gives me pleasure to hear, that
finds Edinburgh so much to his
buthnot will do every thing in his
agreeable to him. To the sound
to the best heart, to a very extent
both of men and books, and to the
correctness of taste, Mr. Arbuthnot's
pleasantry and good humour, which
renders his conversation
and instructive. His character, I
think, resembles that of his namesake,
the famous Dr. John Arbuthnot. His
friend has none of those singularities
which sometimes rendered his conversation
what ridiculous. I am convinced that
phew and he will be mutually
other; and as Mr. Arbuthnot is
with every body in Edinburgh,

from some of the town-council of Edinburgh, of their interest of bringing me into that university, in which, at present, there is a professorship vacant. I thanked them in the best manner I could; but, for several reasons, some of which I specified to them, and with all of which you are well acquainted, I begged leave to decline the offer.

Yesterday's post brought me a letter from the archbishop of York: it is more than friendly; it is an affectionate letter. His grace had written to me soon after my return to Scotland, to congratulate me on my late success; and, by a very delicate hint, he gave me an opportunity of explaining, whether I would now confine my future views to this country, or make any farther efforts to rise higher in the world. My answer to that part of his grace's letter was to the following purpose:

"That my late success was greater than I had any reason either to expect or wish for; that I considered myself as rewarded beyond my deservings; that the provision, now made for me, was sufficient to procure for me, at Aberdeen, every convenience of life which I had any right to aspire after; that I had neither spirits nor bodily health to qualify me for a life of bustle and anxiety; and that I might, perhaps, be as useful in my present station as in any other; that, therefore, to give my friends any farther trouble in seconding my views, would, in my judgment, be to presume too far upon their generosity, and my own merit." The archbishop approves highly of these sentiments. "Your resolution," says he, "to employ your time and endeavours to promote the cause of truth, and your content to remain in Scotland with your present

provisions, is worthy of you; * * * and th
your entry into our church would have been a
acquisition to it, yet I cannot but applaud you
termination."

LV. TO LADY MAYNE.*

Aberdeen, 2d January,

Of my worthy and generous friend, Dr. Maj
I know not what to say. I must leave it to
ladyship to tell him (for no words of mine
energy enough) with what gratitude, affection
esteem, I do, and ever shall, remember him.
sentiments which his royal mistress has
pleased to express, in regard to my affairs,
the greatest honour; and I should be unwor
them, if they did not give me the greatest ple
It is peculiarly fortunate, that her majesty
honour the subscription with her approb
This may exclude, from a certain-quarter,
misrepresentations of this affair, which, I
reason to think, are already circulating, very
to the prejudice of my character. I was, i
somewhat apprehensive, from the beginning
my enemies might tax me with avarice and
dence. But your ladyship and Mrs. Montag
certed the scheme in such a manner, that,
rightly understood, it must redound, even

* The lady of sir William Mayne, bart. afterwards
lord Newhaven. It had been proposed, by some
friends of Dr. Beattie, to publish by subscription an
of the "Essay on Truth." The following letter is
subject.

judgment of my enemies themselves, still more to my honour than it can to my interest. And of this I lately endeavoured to satisfy a friend of mine in England, a gentleman eminent in the literary world, who, on hearing some imperfect account of a subscription, wrote me a letter, urging me, in the most earnest manner, as I valued my character, to put a stop to it. I gave him, in return, as plain an account as, without naming names, could be given, of the rise and progress of the affair. I told him, "that it was a thing of a private nature entirely; projected, not by me, but by some of my friends, who had condescended to charge themselves with the whole trouble of it; that it was never meant to be made public, nor put into the hands of booksellers, nor carried on by solicitation; but was to be considered as a *voluntary* mark of the approbation of some persons of rank and fortune, who wished it to be known that they patronized me on account of what I had written in defence of truth; and that I was so far from desiring to put the patience or generosity of my friends to any farther trial, that I had repeatedly protested, and did still protest, that I was fully satisfied with the provision which, by his majesty's bounty, I now enjoy, which was equal to my wishes, and far superior, in my opinion, to my deservings." I told him, farther, "that, considering the nature of this subscription, and the high character of the persons who had proposed it, I could not have refused my consent, without giving myself airs, which would have very ill become me:" and I added, "that while the subscription, by remaining in suspense, was liable to be misunderstood, I trusted to my

friends for the vindication of my conduct, that, if ever the intended volume came published, I should take care to do justice to the fact, both to them and to myself, by stating the matter fairly to the public." This I will, I hope, satisfy the gentleman, though the description is not, as he was made to be *graceful to my character*, (these are but words, but, on the contrary, highly creditable and honourable. However, that it may never be put to power, even of malice itself, to lay any charge on this score, I would humbly pray that no entreaty should be used to draw in subscribers, and that they who make objections should be addressed a second time on the subject

LVI. TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 8th Janr

SINCE I left London, Mr. Hume's friends contriving a new method to blacken my name, I have been written to upon the subject, and desired to vindicate myself; as the utmost use has been used, even by some people of name, to circulate a malicious report.

The charge against me, as stated in Mr. Arbuthnot's letter, is word for word as follows: "I am accused of rancour and ingratitude to Mr. Hume." "For," say they, "Mr. Hume was very liberal in procuring for me the professors' chairs at Aberdeen, and kept up a friendship with me for some time; till I sent him a poem of mine, (which he printed;) but Mr. Hume not liking it

frank in his nature, sent me word, it was as insipid as milk and water; upon which, bent on revenge, I immediately set about my Essay on Truth, which is full of virulence and misquotation."

You may believe, that an accusation of this sort, in which, *you know*, I can prove there is not one single word of truth, cannot give me much pain. But I should be glad that Mr. Hume, for his own sake, would disavow it; and, indeed, I cannot suppose that he is so destitute of candour, as to give countenance to a report, which he himself certainly knows to be altogether false.

LVII. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 13th March, 1774.

THE second book of the "Minstrel," (which Mr. Fred. Montagu permits me to send under his cover,) will be delivered to you, along with this; and I must give you the trouble to keep it till Mr. Dilly calls for it. You were very indulgent to that part of it which you read last summer, in which I have made no very material alterations. I am impatient to know your opinion of the other part, and particularly of the conclusion, which I do not like the better for its being on a new plan, but to which I cannot help being partial, for the sake of the subject. You will see that the blank is to be filled up with the name of Gregory; a name which I forbear to write at length, till I see whether the public opinion will be so favourable, as to justify my taking that liberty with so dear and so respectable a friend. *The lines relating to him were written (as I think I told you before) immediately after I received the*

melancholy news of his death; when my mind was oppressed with a weight of sorrow, which I did not, and which I needed not, attempt to exaggerate in the description. His friendship was for many years a never-failing source of consolation to me in all my distresses; and he was taken from me at a time when my health was very bad, and my spirits in a most dejected condition. I had a letter from Mr. Gregory, a few days ago, enclosing a copy of "The Father's Legacy." I read it several years ago, in manuscript, and I then told the doctor, that I looked upon it as the most elegant of all his compositions.

You are right in conjecture, in regard to Dr * * * He had, it seems, heard some account of a subscription, and wrote of it to Mr. * * * of * * *, whose letter to me was in these words: "I take the liberty to trouble you with this line, merely to mention a thing, which my friend, Dr. * * *, out of pure good will to you, advises me to mention. He writes me word, that he hears, on good authority, a subscription has been set on foot, and is soliciting, for your 'Minstrel,' (as well the new, as the old part.) This way of publishing it, he thinks, (and I heartily concur with him) will be thought unworthy of your character, and will certainly disgust your best friends. I take it for granted, if the story is true, you have acquiesced in the thing, at the instance of some friend, who did not feel that this method of publishing has so mean an appearance, as it really at present has. I would, therefore, *advise you, by all means, to stop the progress of the affair, as soon as possible; for I really think, it will be highly disgraceful to a person of your confessed*

, if it proceeds, &c." I returned Mr. * * *
 ver in course, and told him, that Dr. * * *
 n misinformed in regard to the "Minstrel,"
 ; there actually was on foot a subscription
 her sort, of which I gave him that account,
 afterwards sent to lady Mayne, in that let-
 ch you read. This happened about three
 ago; and I have not heard from Mr. * * *
 from which I know not whether to draw a
 ble or an unfavourable inference.

, madam, be so good as to favour me with
 count of the bishop of Carlisle, Dr. Law, if
 ens to be of your acquaintance. His lord-
 (a book lately published) has been pleased
 ck me in a strange manner,* though in a
 rds, and very superciliously seems to con-
 ny whole book; "because I believe in the
 of the human soul, and that there are in-
 wers and implanted instincts in our nature."
 s, too, at my being a native of Scotland, and
 my *unnatural way* of reasoning (for so he
 erises it,) to my ignorance of what has been
 on the other side of the question, by some
 hors. It would be a very easy matter for
 return such an answer to his lordship, as
 satisfy the world, that he has been rather
 n signing my condemnation; but, perhaps,
 be better to take no notice of it: I shall be
 ned by your advice. His doctrine is, that
 nan soul forfeited its immortality by the fall,
 gained it in consequence of the merits of

Considerations on the Theory of Religion, by Edmund,
 op of Carlisle.

Jesus Christ, and that it cannot exist without the body; and must, therefore, in the interval between death and the resurrection, remain in a state of non-existence. The theory is not a new one; but his lordship seems to be one of the most sanguine of its adherents. Some of the objections, drawn from the Scripture, he gets the better of by a mode of criticism, which, I humbly think, would not be admitted in a commentary upon any other book.

I must now beg leave to put you in mind, that I have a claim on you for an essay to my quarto volume; for I wish to have in it something new, that is really worth the money to be paid for it. I ground my claim upon a promise, which, I think, you were pleased to make me at Sandleford. Such a contribution will give you no trouble; and to me, considering how poorly provided I am for furnishing out a whole quarto, it will be an act of the greatest charity. The hope of it will be a spur to my industry; for though it is impossible for me to provide for it suitable accommodation, I shall, however, bestir myself in decking and garnishing the rest of the volume for its reception. Since I have been in this state of confinement, I have amused myself in collecting materials for finishing an "Essay on Laughter," which I sketched out about ten years ago. I intend that it shall be one of my additional essays: it is a grave philosophical inquiry into the nature of those objects that provoke laughter, with critical remarks on the different sorts of ludicrous composition, and an attempt to account for the superiority of the moderns over the ancients, in the articles of wit and humour.

have written fifty pages, and shall have nearly as many more to write. When I have finished the first draught, I will have it transcribed, and sent to you.

LVIII. FROM LADY MAYNE.

St. James's Square, London, April 18th, 1774.

I BELIEVE it is unnecessary to say, how much pleasure I have received, in reading over and over the second part of your delightful poem, which, I find, meets with the universal approbation it deserves; and all those, to whom you was so obliging as to send copies, through me, join with sir William and me, in a great many thanks for so agreeable a present.

Mr. John Pitt, of Arlington-street, has desired me to make a proposal to you, which, whether it be agreeable to you or not, will be, I am sure, considered by you as a real proof of his friendship and esteem. It is, that in case you should have resolved to follow the advice of some of your friends, with regard to taking orders in our church, he has a living in his neighbourhood in Dorsetshire, likely to be very soon vacant, which he will not dispose of till he knows your mind. I believe sir William and I know it pretty well; but, as it did not become me to answer for you, I have only undertaken to obtain your own, which he begs may be as soon as possible, because he has a number of applications for it, though the yearly value is only a hundred and fifty pounds. You will, I dare say, judge it proper to write to him yourself upon the occasion.

He is a man of most uncommon goodness of

heart; he and his charming wife are well-
of each other. They both, in the beginning
winter, proposed a plan, for a society of w
posed persons, to raise a fund by volunte
scription, for the relief of distressed and d
objects. The society soon became very nu
as well as rich, and consists of several of th
eat rank and most eminent virtue, besides
who wish to imitate such good examples.

Some very honest judicious people are
pay, to inquire and examine strictly into t
state of all such objects as send in petition
committee of thirty meet every Saturday n
to consider the reports of these inquirers
order suitable relief; besides which, the
body of subscribers, to the amount of five
and upwards, have a general meeting eve
nesday evening, to form general rules and
tions, and consult upon any extraordinar
that may offer. Besides this committee,
another chosen, consisting of six ladies,
seventh called the treasurer, whose depart
to employ poor women in work, who are
trious, but deprived of employment. I da
will immediately strike you, that such an u
plan must soon become impracticable, in
town as this is, from the infinity of busin
would multiply daily: and so it has prove
therefore, about a month ago, found o
obliged to confine ourselves to the resident
parishes; St. James's, St. George's, St. A
Martin's, and Marybone. This gave a littl
for some time; but now, as might well be &
the poor are all establishing themselves

these limits ; so that, I greatly fear, this most excellent scheme cannot hold out long, at least, upon its present footing. However, the zeal that the greatest number of the subscribers manifest, and the indefatigable pains, as well as time, that they employ this way, in spite of all the allurements of pleasure and dissipation that surround them, make me hope, that experience will open the way to some effectual and durable method of doing all the good they wish, both in the way of relief and detection. Lady Charlotte Finch, and her two daughters, her sister, lady Juliana Penn, lady Spencer, lady Erskine, lord and lady Dartree, lady Dartmouth, your friend Mr. Hawkins Browne, the duchess of Northumberland, lord and lady Willoughby, Miss Cowper, Miss Proby, Mrs. Eliz. Carter, and a very great number besides, give up the greatest part of their time and thoughts to this business, to such a degree, that some have suffered in their health by it.

Who would have expected, some time ago, to be so edified in the year 1774, in contemplating the occupations of one of the first and most numerous societies in the environs of St. James's? I know this will give double satisfaction to you, as it tends to confirm your system of *innate* goodness ; for I am sure the greatest part of this society did not acquire theirs, either by prejudices of education, or by the London habits, in which they were early initiated. I dare say it would give you the greatest satisfaction to attend at any of these weekly meetings, where you would see so many amiable people, attentive, *for several hours together*, to the sole purpose of

heart; he and his charming wife are well-deserving of each other. They both, in the beginning of this winter, proposed a plan, for a society of well-disposed persons, to raise a fund by voluntary subscription, for the relief of distressed and deserving objects. The society soon became very numerous as well as rich, and consists of several of the highest rank and most eminent virtue, besides others who wish to imitate such good examples.

Some very honest judicious people are kept in pay, to inquire and examine strictly into the true state of all such objects as send in petitions, and a committee of thirty meet every Saturday morning to consider the reports of these inquirers, and to order suitable relief; besides which, the whole body of subscribers, to the amount of five guineas and upwards, have a general meeting every Wednesday evening, to form general rules and regulations, and consult upon any extraordinary case that may offer. Besides this committee, there is another chosen, consisting of six ladies, and a seventh called the treasurer, whose department is to employ poor women in work, who are industrious, but deprived of employment. I dare say it will immediately strike you, that such an unlimited plan must soon become impracticable, in such a town as this is, from the infinity of business that would multiply daily: and so it has proved. We were therefore, about a month ago, found ourselves obliged to confine ourselves to the residents in five parishes; St. James's, St. George's, St. Ann's, St. Martin's, and Marybone. This gave a little relief for some time; but now, as might well be expected, the poor are all establishing themselves with

these limits; so that, I greatly fear, this most excellent scheme cannot hold out long, at least, upon its present footing. However, the zeal that the greatest number of the subscribers manifest, and the indefatigable pains, as well as time, that they employ this way, in spite of all the allurements of pleasure and dissipation that surround them, make me hope, that experience will open the way to some effectual and durable method of doing all the good they wish, both in the way of relief and detection. Lady Charlotte Finch, and her two daughters, her sister, lady Juliana Penn, lady Spencer, lady Erskine, lord and lady Dartree, lady Dartmouth, your friend Mr. Hawkins Browne, the duchess of Northumberland, lord and lady Willoughby, Miss Cowper, Miss Proby, Mrs. Eliz. Carter, and a very great number besides, give up the greatest part of their time and thoughts to this business, to such a degree, that some have suffered in their health by it.

Who would have expected, some time ago, to be so edified in the year 1774, in contemplating the occupations of one of the first and most numerous societies in the environs of St. James's? I know this will give double satisfaction to you, as it tends to confirm your system of *innate* goodness; for I am sure the greatest part of this society did not acquire theirs, either by prejudices of education, or by the London habits, in which they were early initiated. I dare say it would give you the greatest satisfaction to attend at any of these weekly meetings, where you would see so many amiable people, attentive, *for several hours together*, to the sole purpose of

trying to alleviate the distresses of their fellow-creatures.

LIX. TO LADY MAYNE.

Aberdeen, 30th May, 1774.

I HAVE enclosed an answer to Mr. John Pitt's very kind offer, which you will be so good as to forward. I thank him for his generosity, of which, indeed, I have a very affecting sense: but I tell him, that, by the advice of my best friends, I have given up all thoughts of entering into the church, many months ago.

I am much obliged to you, madam, for your agreeable account of the charitable society lately established in the neighbourhood of St. James's. It is, as you observe, an honour to my theory of virtue: but, what gives me much more pleasure, (theorist as I am,) it does honour also to the virtue and good sense of the age, it does honour to human nature. I do not know any thing more desirable nor more difficult, than to lay down, and carry into execution, a proper plan for the relief of the poor, which, without encouraging idleness or vice, shall administer real comfort to the helpless and the needy. The provision, established by your poor's rate in England, is, indeed, very ample; nay, in some places so exorbitant, that I should think nothing could flourish in those places, but poverty. I have heard of eight, ten, nay, even fourteen shillings in the pound, paid, in some parishes, to the poor's rate, which, added to the land-tax, would seem to *make the land-holder the poorest man in the di-*

There must be some grievous mismanagement both in the exaction and application of such and it were most devoutly to be wished, the legislature would endeavour to provide a remedy for so enormous an evil. Till this be done, what individuals can in prudence do, is to interfere into, and relieve the necessities of those poor who live in their neighbourhood, and with whose circumstances they are well acquainted, either from personal knowledge or undoubted information. Were this done in all parts of the kingdom, the poor would be better supplied than by any legal provision, how great soever; and begging, as a trade, would be at an end; and nothing can be more praise-worthy, than for persons of rank and fortune to set the example of so benevolent an institution.

A prince of Liege, in order to cancel all at once the wrong side of his spiritual account, bequeathed, on his death-bed, his whole fortune, which was very large, to the poor, appointing the magistrates of Liege his administrators. The consequence is, that of all the beggars and vagabonds in the Netherlands, Liege is now the common receptacle. It is no uncommon thing for an army of five or six thousand of these people to invest the house of the chief magistrate, and threaten to extirpate him and all his generation, with fire and sword, if he does not instantly make a pecuniary distribution. The gentleman from whom I have this account, and who is a person of sense and veracity, resided some time in Liege, and, to give an idea of the multitude of beggars that swarm in the streets of that town, told me

farther, that one day, in walking half a n gave away to professed beggars, not less than eight pieces of money. I need not tell you ship what inferences are to be drawn from story.

LX. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 3d May,

I AM greatly obliged and honoured by what hierarchy have done, and are doing for me. Dr. Law's attack I shall take no farther notice of.

I received a letter, two days ago, from Dr. It is a very kind letter, and much in praise of "Minstrel." Lord Chesterfield's "Letters" says, are well calculated for the purpose of teaching "manners without morals" to our young people. This opinion I had, indeed, begun to form concerning them, from some short extracts in newspapers. In one of these extracts I was surprised to see such a pompous encomium on Kingbrooke's *Patriot King*, which has appeared to me a mere *vox et præterea nihil*. He was one of the first who introduced the fashion of giving us fine words instead of good sense; as in his other faults, he has been successfully imitated by Shaftesbury; but I know not whether he, or any other author, has ever put together so many words with so little meaning, as Kingbrooke, in his papers on Patriotism.

* See letter, No. 57.

† Afterwards bishop of Worcester.

Lord Monboddo's second volume has been published some time. It is, I think, much better than the first, and contains much learning, and not a little ingenuity; but can never be very interesting, except to those who aim at a grammatical and critical knowledge of the Greek tongue. Lord Kaim's "Sketches" I have seen. They are not much different from what I expected. A man, who reads thirty years, with a view to collect facts, in support of two or three whimsical theories, may, no doubt, collect a great number of facts, and make a very large book. The world will wonder when they hear of a modern philosopher who seriously denies the existence of such a principle as universal benevolence;—a point, of which no good man can entertain a doubt for a single moment.

I am sorry for poor Goldsmith. There were some things in his temper which I did not like; but I liked many things in his genius; and I was sorry to find, last summer, that he looked upon me as a person who seemed to stand between him and his interest. However, when next we meet, all this will be forgotten; and the jealousy of authors (which Dr. Gregory used to say, was next in rancour to that of physicians,) will be no more.

I am glad that you are pleased with the additional stanzas of the second canto of the "Minstrel;" but I fear you are too indulgent. How it will be relished by the public, I cannot even guess. I know all its faults; but I cannot remedy them, for they are faults in the first concoction; they result from the imperfection of the plan. I am much obliged to you, madam, for advising that two copies

should be presented to their majesties, which writes me word, has been done by my good Dr. Majendie. This honour I meant to have cited when the second edition came out, which will be soon. My reason for this delay was, the first edition having been put to press, and sheets of it printed off before I knew, I had in my power to order any copies on fine paper. But it is better as it is: the paper of the first edition will not be at all amiss.

My "Essay on Laughter" advances but slowly. I have all my materials at hand; but my publisher obliges me to labour very moderately in reducing them into order. I am very unwilling to relinquish the hope of receiving from you, madam, some assistance in completing my volume. I beg you to think of it. Perhaps you may find more time when you come into the North.

Mr. Mason has never answered the letter I wrote to him concerning the subscription. I gather from the tenor of his letters, that he is (as you are) out of humour with the world. Mr. Dilly writes me word, that he says he is tempted to throw his "Life of Mr. Gray" (which is now nearly finished,) into the fire, so much is he dissatisfied with the late decision on literary property. In the way, I heartily wish the legislature to make a new law, set this matter on a proper footing. Literature must suffer if this decision remains unobviated.

LXI. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 27th May, 1774.

I AM much diverted by Johnson's character of lord Chesterfield's Letters. Dr. Hurd and Mr. Mason (for I have heard from them both since the second part of "The Minstrel" came out) give nearly the same account of them.

Mr. Mason seems now to be tolerably reconciled to the subscription, but he has found a new subject of concern, in this allegorical picture by sir Joshua Reynolds, which, he thinks, can hardly fail to hurt my character in good earnest. I know not certainly in what light Mr. Mason considers this picture; but, so far as I have yet heard, he is singular in his opinion. If Mr. Gray had done me the honour to address an ode to me, and speak in high terms of my attack on the sceptics, my enemies might have blamed him for his partiality, and the world might have thought that he had employed his Muse in too mean an office; but would any body have blamed me? If sir Joshua Reynolds thinks more favourably of me than I deserve (which he certainly does,) and if he entertains the same favourable sentiments of my cause which I wish him and all the world to entertain, I should be glad to know from Mr. Mason, what there is in all this to fix any blame on my character? Indeed, if I had planned this picture, and urged sir Joshua to paint it, and paid him for his trouble, and then had solicited admittance for it into the Exhibition, the world would have had good reason to exclaim against me as a *rain coxcomb*; but I am persuaded, that nobody

will ever suspect me of this: for I
without first supposing that I am.

About three weeks ago, I received
letter from Dr. Priestley, of which
a copy: "Reverend sir—Think
every person should be apprised of
in which his writings are animating
take the liberty to send you a copy
will soon be published, in which
intention to remark upon the preface
'Essay on Truth.' I am, your
humble servant, J. Priestley." This
a preface to a third volume of "The
gion." That you, madam, may be
bled to judge between him and me
in a separate packet, which will be
with this.

I never saw Dr. Priestley; I judge
talents as a natural philosopher,
chemist: whether his talents in
be as distinguished, I have no opportunity
ing. His excessive admiration of
book I have heard mentioned as one of
doctor's hobby-horses. I am not
connexions in the way of party; but
attack upon my book, he is determined
but a love of truth. I need not tell
the oracle of the Socinians and Deists
public will no doubt expect that
his preface. This will not be a
The doctor must certainly have
since he declares, in print, his disapprobation
but that he has read it attentively.
judice, is not clear. Certain it

f his remarks on me, as they appear in this preface, is founded in a gross misapprehension of my doctrine. I have written him a letter, which I enclose in this packet for your perusal: if you approve of it, please to cause it be forwarded to him; if not, you may suppress it.

One would think, from reading Dr. Priestley's preface, that Dr. Reid, Dr. Oswald, and I, wrote in concert, and with a view to enforce the very same hypothesis. But the truth is, that I write in concert with nobody: Dr. Oswald's book I never read till after my own was published; and Dr. Reid (to whom I have made all due acknowledgments for the instruction I have received from his work) never saw mine, till it was in the hands of the public. The controversial part of Dr. Reid's book regards the existence of matter chiefly; Dr. Oswald's system (though there are many good things in his book) I never distinctly understood. The former of these authors differs in many things from me; and the latter (if I am rightly informed) has actually attacked a fundamental principle of mine, in a second volume, lately published, which I have not yet got leisure to read.

LXII. FROM THE REV. DR. PORTEUS.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, July 24th, 1774.

I AM desired, by one of the episcopal bench, whose name I am not yet at liberty to mention,* to ask you, whether you have any objections to taking orders in the church of England. If you have not,

* This prelate was Dr. Thomas, bishop of Winchester.

there is a living, now vacant, in his gift, worth near five hundred pounds a-year, which will be at your service.

Be pleased to send me your answer to this, as soon as possible, and direct it to me at Peterborough, in Northamptonshire, where I shall probably be before your letter can reach me. I feel myself happy in being the instrument of communicating to you so honourable and advantageous a proof of the esteem which your literary labours have secured to you amongst all ranks of people.

LXIII. TO THE REV. DR. PORTEUS.

Peterhead, 4th August, 1774.

I HAVE made many efforts to express, in something like adequate language, my grateful sense of the honour done me by the right reverend prelate, who makes the offer conveyed to me in your most friendly letter of the 24th July. But every new effort serves only to convince me, more and more, how unequal I am to the task.

When I consider the extraordinary reception which my weak endeavours in the cause of truth have met with, and compare the greatness of my success with the insignificance of my merit, who reasons have I not to be thankful and humble! I am ashamed that I have done so little public service, and to regret that so little *is in my power*! I arouse every power of my nature to purposes of benevolent tendency, in order to justify, by my intentions at least, the unexampled generosity of my benefactors!

My religious opinions would, no doubt, if I were

to declare them, sufficiently account for, and vindicate, my becoming a member of the church of England: and I flatter myself, that my studies, way of life, and habits of thinking, have always been such, as would not disqualify me for an ecclesiastical profession. If I were to become a clergyman, the church of England would certainly be my choice; as I think, that, in regard to church-government and church-service, it has many great and peculiar advantages. And I am so far from having any natural disinclination to holy orders, that I have several times, at different periods of my life, been disposed to enter into them, and have directed my studies accordingly. Various accidents, however, prevented me; some of them pretty remarkable, and such as I think I might, without presumption, ascribe to a particular interposition of Providence.

The offer now made me, is great and generous beyond all expectation. I am well aware of all the advantages and honours that would attend my accepting, and yet I find myself obliged, in conscience, to decline it; as I lately did another of the same kind (though not so considerable) that was made me, on the part of another English gentleman. The reasons which did then, and do now determine me, I beg leave, sir, briefly to lay before you.

I wrote the "Essay on Truth," with the certain prospect of raising many enemies, with very faint hopes of attracting the public attention, and without any views of advancing my fortune. I published it, however, because I thought it might probably do *little good, by bringing to naught, or at least*

lessening the reputation of that wretched system of sceptical philosophy, which had made a most alarming progress, and done incredible mischief to this country. My enemies have been at great pains to represent my views, in that publication, as very different; and that my principal, or only motive, was to make a book, and, if possible, to raise myself higher in the world. So that, if I were now to accept preferment in the church, I should be apprehensive that I might strengthen the hands of the gainsayer, and give the world some ground to believe that my love of truth was not quite so ardent or so pure as I had pretended.

Besides, might it not have the appearance of levity and insincerity, and, by some, be construed into a want of principle, if I were at these years (for I am now thirty-eight) to make such an important change in my way of life, and to quit, with no other *apparent* motive than that of bettering my circumstances, that church of which I have hitherto been a member? If my book has any tendency to do good, as I flatter myself it has, I would not, for the wealth of the Indies, do any thing to counteract that tendency; and I am afraid that tendency might, in some measure, be counteracted (at least in this country,) if I were to give the adversary the least ground to charge me with inconsistency. It is true, that the force of my reasonings cannot be *really* affected by my character: truth is truth, whoever be the speaker: but even truth itself becomes less respectable, when spoken, or supposed to be spoken, by insincere lips.

It has also been hinted to me, by several persons of very sound judgment, that what I have written,

or may hereafter write, in favour of religion, has a chance of being more attended to, if I continue a layman, than if I were to become a clergyman. Nor am I without apprehensions (though some of my friends think them ill-founded,) that, from entering so late in life, and from so remote a province, into the church of England, some degree of ungracefulness, particularly in pronunciation, might adhere to my performances in public, sufficient to render them less pleasing, and consequently less useful.

Most of these reasons were repeatedly urged upon me, during my stay in England last summer; and I freely own, that the more I consider them, the more weight they seem to have: and from the peculiar manner in which the king has been graciously pleased to distinguish me, and from other circumstances, I have some ground to presume, that it is his majesty's pleasure that I should continue where I am, and employ my leisure hours in prosecuting the studies I have begun. This I can find time to do more effectually in Scotland than in England, and in Aberdeen than in Edinburgh; which, by the bye, was one of my chief reasons for declining the Edinburgh professorship. The business of my professorship here is indeed toilsome; but I have, by fourteen years' practice, made myself so much master of it, that it now requires little mental labour; and our long summer vacation, of seven months, leaves me at my own disposal for the greatest and best part of the year; a situation favourable to literary projects, and now become necessary to my health.

Soon after my return home, in autumn last, I had occasion to write to the archbishop of York on

this subject. I specified my reasons for giving up all thoughts of church-preferment, and his grace was pleased to approve of them; nay, he condescended so far as to say, they did me honour. I told his grace, moreover, that I had already given a great deal [of trouble to my noble and generous patrons in England, and could not think of being any longer a burthen to them, now that his majesty had so graciously and so generously made for me a provision equal to my wishes, and such as puts it in my power to obtain, in Scotland, every convenience of life, to which I have any title, or any inclination, to aspire.

I must, therefore, make it my request to you, that you would present my humble respects and most thankful acknowledgments to the eminent person, at whose desire you wrote your last letter, (whose name, I hope, you will not be under the necessity of concealing from me,) and assure him, that, though I have taken the liberty to decline his generous offer, I shall, to the last hour of my life, preserve a most grateful remembrance of the honour he has condescended to confer upon me; and, to prove myself not altogether unworthy of his goodness, shall employ that health and leisure which Providence may hereafter afford me, in opposing infidelity, heresy, and error, and in promoting sound literature and Christian truth to the utmost of my power.

LXIV. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 5th August, 1774.

STLEY's Preface is come out, without any edgment of the information conveyed to my letter. But he has written to me on sion, and says, he will publish my letter in k which he is preparing, in opposition to ssay on Truth," as he thinks such a letter me honour. He praises the candour and ty which, he says, appear in my letter, and o be satisfied that I wrote my book with a ention; which is the only merit he allows east he mentions no other. He blames me igly for my want of moderation, and for , as I have done, of the *moral influence* of . He owns that his notions, on some of ts in which he differs from me, are exceed- popular, and likely to continue so; and at, perhaps, no two persons professing nity ever thought more differently than he . It is a loss to me, he seems to think, ave never been acquainted with such per- himself and his friends in England: to this dined to impute the improper style I have se of on some subjects; but he hopes, a lection, and a candid examination of what write against me, will bring me to a better hinking and speaking. His motive for en- e lists with me, is no other, he says, than ere and pretty strong, though, perhaps, a a regard to truth." This is the substance

of his letter, as I understand it. There are, indeed, some things in it, which I do not distinctly understand ; and therefore, I believe, I shall not at present make any reply. He does not tell me, what the points of difference between us are : but I find, from some reports that have penetrated even to this remote corner, that he has taken some pains to let it be known that he is writing an answer to my book. A volume of his " Institutes of Religion " lately fell into my hand, which is the first of his theological works I have seen ; and, I must confess, it does not give me any high opinion of him. His notions of Christianity are indeed different from mine ; so very different, that I know not whether I should think it necessary or proper to assume the title of a Christian, if I were to think and write as he does. When one proceeds so far, as to admit some parts of the Gospel history, and reject others ; as to suppose, that some of the facts recorded by the evangelists of our Saviour may reasonably be disbelieved, and others doubted—when one, I say, has proceeded thus far, we may, without breach of charity, conclude, that he has within him a spirit of paradox and presumption, which may prompt him to proceed much farther. Dr. Priestley's doctrines seem to me to strike at the very vitals of Christianity. His success in some of the branches of natural knowledge seems to have intoxicated him, and led him to fancy that he was master of every subject, and had a right to be a dictator in all : for, in this book of his, there is often a boldness of assertion, followed by a *weakness of argument*, which no man of parts would ad-

venture upon, who did not think that his word would be taken for a law. I am impatient for the appearance of his book against me, as I cannot prepare matters for a new edition of the "Essay on Truth," till I see what he has to say against it.

I have not seen Dr. Gerard's "Essay on Genius." I know the author very well, for I studied philosophy under him; he is a man of great worth, learning, and good sense. His "Essay on Taste" (which you have probably seen) was well received; and, I am confident, there will be many good things in this new work, notwithstanding the unpromising and hackneyed title.

LXV. TO THE REV. MR. WILLIAM CAMERON.*

Aberdeen, 22d September, 1774.

Your judgment of Addison is quite right. His prose is most elegant, and deserves to be carefully studied for the style as well as for the matter; but his poetry is in general cold, and prosaic, and inharmonious. Yet his tragedy of "Cato" has great merit; and his comedy of "The Drummer" is, in my opinion, one of the best dramatic pieces in our language. He attempted a translation of Homer, and actually published the first book of it, under Tickell's name, in opposition to Pope's; but the performance is altogether unworthy of Addison, and totally destitute of the fire, and energy, and harmony of Homer.

* Minister of the parish of Kirk-Newton, in the county of West Lothian.

Your studies are in an excellent train. Read the classics day and night, till you make yourself master of them. Exercise yourself in frequent compositions in English prose. Write your thoughts on every subject, and carefully keep what you write. Attend to the phraseology of the best English writers, with a view to correct and improve your English style. We Scotsmen find it a very difficult matter to get rid of the barbarisms of our native dialect.

LXVI. TO THE REV. DR. PORTEUS.

Aberdeen, 4th March, 1775.

I HAVE just finished a hasty perusal of Dr. Johnson's journey. It contains many things worthy of the author, and is, on the whole, very entertaining. His account of the isles is, I dare say, very just: I never was there, and therefore can say nothing of them from my own knowledge. His accounts of *some* facts, relating to other parts of Scotland, are not unexceptionable. Either he must have been misinformed; or he must have misunderstood his informer, in regard to several of his remarks on the improvement of the country. I am surprised at one of his mistakes, which leads him once or twice into perplexity and false conjecture: he seems not to have known, that, in the common language of Scotland, *Irish* and *Earse* are both used to denote the speech of the Scots Highlanders; and are as much synonymous (at least in many parts of *the kingdom*) as *Scotch* and *Scottish*. *Irish* is generally thought the genteeler appellation, and *Earse*

the vulgar and colloquial. His remarks on the *trees* of Scotland, must greatly surprise a native. In some of our provinces, trees cannot be reared by any method of cultivation we have yet discovered ; in some, where trees flourish extremely well, they are not *much* cultivated, because they are not necessary : but in others, we have store of wood, and forests of great extent, and of great antiquity. I am sorry to see in Johnson some asperities that seem to be the effect of national prejudice. If he thinks himself thoroughly acquainted with the character of the Scots as a nation, he is greatly mistaken. The Scots have virtues, and the Scots have faults, of which he seems to have had no particular information. I am one of those who wish to see the English spirit and English manners prevail over the whole island ; for I think the English have a generosity and openness of nature, which many of us want. But we are not all, without exception, a nation of cheats and liars, as Johnson seems willing to believe, and to represent us. Of the better sort of our people, the character is just the reverse. I admire Johnson's genius ; I esteem him for his virtues ; I shall ever cherish a grateful remembrance of the civilities I have received from him : I have often, in this country, exerted myself in defence both of his character and writings ; but there are in this book several things which I cannot defend. His unbelief, in regard to Ossian, I am not surprised at ; but I wonder greatly at his credulity in regard to the second-sight. I cannot imagine on what grounds he could say, that, in the *universities of Scotland*, every master of arts may be a doc-

tor when he pleases. I never heard of such a thing, and I have been connected with our universities ever since I was a boy. Our method of giving doctor's degrees I do not approve of; but we proceed on a principle quite different from what Dr. Johnson mentions.

INDEX.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. To Dr. John Ogilvie	3
II. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.	12
III. To the same	13
IV. To the same	16
V. To the same	17
VI. To Mr. Gray	19
VII. To Sir William Forbes	20
VIII. To Dr. Blacklock	22
IX. To Sir William Forbes	24
X. To the same	27
XI. To Dr. Blacklock	31
XII. To the Hon. Charles Boyd	34
XIII. To Sir William Forbes	37
XIV. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.	41
XV. To Dr. Blacklock	42
XVI. To the Rev. James Williamson	44
XVII. To Sir William Forbes	45
XVIII. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.	47
XIX. To Dr. Blacklock	49
XX. To the Hon. Charles Boyd	52
XXI. To Dr. Blacklock	59
XXII. To Sir William Forbes	67
XXIII. To the same	71
XXIV. To Captain Mercer	74
XXV. To the Earl of Buchan	77
XXVI. To the same	79
XXVII. To Sir William Forbes	80
XXVIII. To Dr. Blacklock	83
XXIX. To Mrs. Inglis	87
XXX. To Sir William Forbes	92
XXXI. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.	93
XXXII. From Dr. John Gregory	94
XXXIII. To the Rt. Hon. the Dowager Lady Forbes	95

No.

- XXXIV. To the Rev. Mr. Williamson .
 XXXV. To Mrs. Montagu
 XXXVI. From Dr. Percy
 XXXVII. From Dr. Porteus
 XXXVIII. To Mrs. Montagu
 XXXIX. To Dr. Porteus
 XL. To Mrs. Montagu
 XLI. From Dr. Drummond, Archbishop
 XLII. To Sir William Forbes
 XLIII. To Mrs. Montagu
 XLIV. To Sir William Forbes
 XLV. To Mrs. Montagu
 XLVI. To the same
 XLVII. To Dr. Porteus
 XLVIII. To Mrs. Montagu
 XLIX. To the Earl of Kinnoull
 L. To Mrs. Montagu
 LI. To Sir William Forbes
 LII. To the same
 LIII. To the same
 LIV. To Mrs. Montagu
 LV. To Lady Mayne
 LVI. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.
 LVII. To Mrs. Montagu
 LVIII. From Lady Mayne
 LIX. To Lady Mayne
 LX. To Mrs. Montagu
 LXI. To the same
 LXII. From the Rev. Dr. Porteus
 LXIII. To the Rev. Dr. Porteus
 LXIV. To Mrs. Montagu
 LXV. To the Rev. William Cameron
 LXVI. To the Rev. Dr. Porteus

THE END OF VOL. I.

Printed by T. Davison, Whitefri

THE
LETTERS
OF
JAMES BEATTIE.
VOL. II.



LONDON;
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.
1820.





have not the sea, we have a boundless prospect of a rich country, extending upwards of thirty miles. Here I have made it my business to be as idle as possible, in order to indemnify myself for the fatigue and bustle of London; and, since I came hither, my health has improved greatly. Mrs. Beattie is also much better. But we must soon think of returning to the North, as we wish to be in Aberdeen early in August, and have many visits to make by the way.

During my stay in London, I visited most of my old friends, and made several new acquisitions, particularly among the bishops and clergy, who all showed me a degree of attention far superior to my deservings. I have been at court too, where the king (who knew me at first sight) was pleased to speak to me very graciously, asking me several questions about my studies, and observing, that I looked much better than when he saw me last.

You will no doubt be curious to hear something of Priestley. I have not yet met with, nor heard of, one single person, who does not blame his book against Dr. Reid and me. Even those of his admirers, who think favourably of his arguments, condemn the spirit of that performance. But the book has attracted very little notice, and would seem at present to be in a fair way of being speedily forgotten, notwithstanding the pains taken by its author to puff it away in newspapers. My inclination was (as I told you) to publish a pamphlet in direct answer to it. But I now begin to think, that will be unnecessary, and will only give scope to further controversy, Dr. Priestley having already *declared*, that he will answer whatever I may pub-

lish in my own vindication ; and being a man who loves bustle and book-making, he wishes above all things that I should give him a pretext for continuing the dispute. To silence him by force of argument, is, I know, impossible. He would still fall upon new modes of misrepresentation, and would still find it an easy matter to make a book, which should seem plausible to his implicit admirers, or to those who had entered but slightly into the subject. All my friends here have been urging me not to answer him ; and have told me, what I know is true, that his work cannot possibly do me any harm ; that it has been little read, and will soon be forgotten ; that he is a man of that sort, that it is even creditable (on moral and religious subjects at least) to have him for an adversary ; and that I cannot gratify him more, than by writing against him. All this, I say, I know to be true ; yet I am not entirely of their opinion, who think that I ought to neglect him altogether. I therefore propose to take a middle course : and, without making any formal answer to Dr. Priestley, to write something by way of *general answer* to those *objections to my doctrine* that have appeared hitherto in pamphlets or newspapers ; observing, at the same time, that I do not think it worth while to reply to the *abuse* that has been thrown out against me, or to those *misrepresentations of my meaning*, which some authors, particularly Dr. Priestley, have thought proper to obtrude upon the world.

LXVIII. TO THE REV. DR. PORTEUS.

St. James's Square, July 9th, 17

Dr. MAJENDIE has just returned to me the letter he wrote, declining the offer of the church-living, and send it to you enclosed. He gave it to the gentleman who condescended to read it over from beginning to end, and was then pleased to say, "That it is a very sensible letter, and did me much honour." I was anxious, that my reasons for choosing to continue a layman should be known at court; and report has been circulating, that I declined church preferment in England, because I could not reconcile myself to the doctrines and discipline of the church:—a report which those who know me know to be ill-founded. I admire the church of England on many accounts. I think I could, with a clear conscience, live and die a member, or a minister of it. Its doctrines seem to me to be those of Christianity; its rites and ceremonies greatly approve of; and the constitution of the hierarchy is equally favourable to the interests of religion, and the civil government of this country.

LXIX. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th August, 17

AFTER passing a few days with our friends at Edinburgh, we proceeded northwards, and arrived in safety about ten days ago. The last stage of our journey was distinguished by an accident, which if Providence had not interposed, would have been the last stage of our life. The iron axle of

aise snapped suddenly in two, and the carriage was
rown upon its side, within two feet of the brink
a precipice, thirty yards deep. Here we lay for
ew moments, with the horses flouncing about us,
at last, partly by the harness giving way, and
rtly by the activity of the postilion, they were dis-
gaged from the carriage, and went off at full
eed. An English gentleman, on horseback, was
en in sight, behind us, who immediately galloped
, and, in the most humane manner, inquired
ether he could be of any service; and, having
en us fairly rescued from our shattered vehicle,
mounted his horse, galloped back to the inn, and
on returned with another chaise.

I have begun my transcribing, which, even if I
d nothing to do in the way of correction, would
ke up some hours of every day for months to
me. I have made many attempts at a preface to
y quarto volume; but have not, as yet, been able
please myself. It seems to me, that the best
ay to obviate all objections, and to prevent mis-
kes, in regard to this publication, is to give a
ort and honest account of the plain matter of
ct. This I have endeavoured to do in the en-
osed paper, with which, if you approve of it, I
tend to begin my preface. The sequel will con-
in some account of the additional essays, and of
e improvements in this edition of the "Essay on
ruth."

To make some amends for the terrifying inci-
ent recorded in the first part of this letter, I
all now mention a pleasing one, which was told
e by a gentleman of this country, a friend of
ine, who lately went to Stratford upon Avon, to

pay his duty at the shrine of the *man of Warwickshire*. You certainly know, that Garrick erected a statue of Shakspeare, in a niche in the wall of the town-house, facing the street. As my friend was contemplating this statue, he saw, perched on one of the hands, a dove, which, at first, he took for an emblem, as the creature was quite motionless; but which, in a little time, began to move, and scramble upwards, till it reached the bosom of the statue, in which, as in its home, it nestled, with great appearance of satisfaction. Charles Boyd, lord Erroll's brother, has, I hear, composed a little poem on the subject, of which I shall send you a copy, as soon as I have seen the author. If Mr. Garrick comes in your way before you leave England, I am sure he will be pleased with this little narrative.

The day after I returned home, I visited the little man, whose magnanimity you are pleased to reward in so generous a manner. I found him in great want of clothes, and very infirm; for he is now of a great age. I told him, that a lady in England had desired me to give him some money. This very interesting news he received with much composure, but implored, with great fervour, the blessing of Heaven upon his benefactress. I have not seen him since that time. Since the days of chivalry, I do not suppose that any lady has had so complete a dwarf, as you, madam, have now at your service; for I cannot think that he is full three feet high.

LXX. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th September, 1775.

YOUR reflections on the little disaster with which our journey concluded, exactly coincide with mine. I agree with Hawkesworth, that the peril and the deliverance are equally providential ; and I wonder he did not see, that both the one and the other may be productive of the very best effects. These little accidents and trials are necessary to put us in mind of that superintending goodness, to which we are indebted for every breath we draw, and of which, in the hour of tranquillity, many of us are too apt to be forgetful. But you, madam, forget nothing which a Christian ought to remember ; and, therefore, I hope and pray, that Providence may defend you from every alarm. By the way, there are several things, besides that preface to which I just now referred, in the writings of Hawkesworth, that show an unaccountable perplexity of mind in regard to some of the principles of natural religion. I observed, in his conversation, -that he took a pleasure in ruminating upon riddles, and puzzling questions, and calculations ; and he seems to have carried something of the same temper into his moral and theological researches. His "Almorán and Hamet" is a strange confused narrative, and leaves upon the mind of the reader some disagreeable impressions, in regard to the ways of Providence ; and from the theory of *pity*, which he has given us somewhere in "The Adventurer," one would suspect that he was no enemy to the philosophy of Hobbes. However, I am disposed to impute all

this rather to a vague way of thinking, than to any perversity of heart or understanding: only I wish, that, in his last work, he had been more ambitious to tell the plain truth, than to deliver to the world a wonderful story. I confess, that, from the first, I was inclined to consider his vile portrait of the manners of Otaheite as in part fictitious; and I am now assured, upon the very best authority, that Dr. Solander disavows some of those narrations, or at least declares them to be grossly misrepresented. There is, in almost all the late books of travels I have seen, a disposition on the part of the author to recommend licentious theories. I would not object to the truth of any fact that is warranted by the testimony of competent witnesses. But how few of our travellers are competent judges of the facts they relate! How few of them know any thing accurately of the language of those nations, whose laws, religion, and moral sentiments, they pretend to describe! And how few of them are free from that inordinate love of the marvellous, which stimulates equally the vanity of the writer and the curiosity of the reader! Suppose a Japanese crew to arrive in England, take in wood and water, exchange a few commodities, and, after a stay of three months, to set sail for their own country, and there set forth a history of the English government, religion, and manners: it is, I think, highly probable, that, for one truth, they would deliver a score of falsehoods. But Europeans, it will be said, have more sagacity, and know more of mankind. Be it so: but this advantage is not without inconveniences, sufficient, perhaps, to counterbalance it. *When a European arrives in any remote part of*

the globe, the natives, if they know any thing of his country, will be apt to form no favourable opinion of his intentions, with regard to their liberties; if they know nothing of him, they will yet keep aloof, on account of his strange language, complexion, and accoutrements. In either case, he has little chance of understanding their laws, manners, and principles of action, except by a long residence in the country, which would not suit the views of one traveller in five thousand. He, therefore, picks up a few strange plants and animals, which he may do with little trouble or danger; and, at his return to Europe, is welcomed by the literati as a philosophic traveller of most accurate observation, and unquestionable veracity. He describes, perhaps, with tolerable exactness, the soils, plants, and other irrational curiosities of the new country, which procures credit to what he has to say of the people; though his accuracy in describing the material phenomena is no proof of his capacity to explain the moral. One can easily dig to the root of a plant, but it is not so easy to penetrate the motive of an action; and, till the motive of an action be known, we are no competent judges of its morality, and in many cases the motive of an action is not to be known without a most intimate knowledge of the language and manners of the agent. Our traveller then delivers a few facts of the moral kind, which, perhaps, he does not understand, and from them draws some inferences suitable to the taste of the times, or to a favourite hypothesis. He tells us of a Californian, who sold his bed in a morning, and came with tears in his eyes to beg it back at night; whence, he very

wisely infers, that the poor Californi one degree above the brutes in unde that they have neither foresight nor cient to direct their conduct on the occasions of life. In a word, they are ferent species of animal from the E it is a gross mistake to think, that all descended from the same first pare needs not go so far as to Californi men who sacrifice a future good to a fication. In the metropolis of Grea may meet with many reputed Christian act the same part, for the pleasure half a day in a gin-shop. Again, to same important truth, that man is a little better, we are told of another n banks of the Orellana, so wonderfully they cannot reckon beyond the numb point to the hair of their head, w would signify a greater number; as four thousand, were to them equally But, whence it comes to pass that are capable of speech, or of reckonin so far as to three, is a difficulty of whi rian attempts not the solution. But solve it, I must beg leave to tell him, half of his tale contradicts the other as if he had told us of a people who as to be incapable of bodily exertion, s he had seen one of them lift a stone o weight.—I beg your pardon, madam, into this subject. The truth is, I was *ing to write upon it; but I shall not these many months.*

Take no farther concern about your dwarf. The person whom you honour with your notice, I shall always think it my duty to care for. I have let it be known in the town what you have done for him; which, I hope, will be a spur to the generosity of others. He has paid me but one visit as yet. His wants are few; and he seems to be modest as well as magnanimous. Both virtues certainly entitle him to consideration.

LXXI. TO THE HONOURABLE MR. BARON GORDON.*

Aberdeen, 6th February, 1776.

I HAVE been very much employed in preparing some little things of mine for the press; otherwise I should sooner have acknowledged the favour of your most obliging letter.

The last time I read Virgil, I took it into my head, that the tenth and eleventh books of the *Æneid* were not so highly finished as the rest. Every body knows, that the last six books are less perfect than the first six; and I fancied that some of the last six came nearer to perfection than others. I cannot now recollect my reasons for this conceit; but I propose to read the *Æneid* again, as soon as I have got rid of this publication; and I hope I shall then be in a condition to give something of a reasonable answer to any question you may do me the honour to propose in regard to that matter.

I do not mean that the tenth or eleventh books

* Cosmo Gordon of Cluny, in Aberdeenshire, one of the barons of his majesty's court of exchequer in Scotland.

are at all imperfect; I only mean that they are short of Virgilian perfection. And many passages there are in both, which Virgil himself could not, in my opinion, have made better. Such as the story of Mezentius and Lausus, in the end of the tenth book; and that passage in the eleventh where old Evander meets the dead body of his son Mezentius is a character of Virgil's own invention, and it is extremely well-drawn: a tyrant, hated by his people, on account of his impiety and cruelty, yet graced with one amiable virtue, which is sometimes found in very rugged characters, a tender affection for a most deserving son. This affection is one of those virtues which Virgil has clothed upon with peculiar pleasure; he never omits the opportunity of bringing it in, and he always dresses it in the most lovely colours. Æneas, Ascanius, Euryalus, Lausus, are all eminent for this virtue, and Turnus, when he asks his life, asks it on the sake of his poor old father. Let a young man read the Æneid with taste and attention, and he will not be an undutiful child if he can. I think of nothing very distinguishing in Camilla. For it is not easy to imagine more than one form of character. The adventures of her early youth are however, highly interesting, and wildly romantic. The circumstance of her being, when an infant, thrown across a river, tied to a javelin, is very singular, that I should suppose Virgil had borrowed it from some history; and, if I mistake not, Plutarch has told such a story of king Pyrrhus. The death of the horse, in the end of the eleventh book, is well conducted, considering that Virgil was left to his shifts, and had not Homer to assist him.

The speeches of Drances and Turnus are highly animated ; and nothing could be better contrived to raise our idea of Æneas, than the answer which Diomed gives to the ambassadors from the Italian army.

I ought to ask pardon for troubling you with these superficial remarks. But a desire to approve myself worthy of being honoured with your commands, has led me into a subject, for which I am not at present prepared. When I have the pleasure to pay my respects to you at Cluny, which, I hope, will be early in the summer, I shall be glad to talk over these matters, and to correct my opinions by yours.

LXXII. TO THE REV. MR. CAMERON.

Aberdeen, 22d February, 1776.

THE objections to the " Essay on Truth," which you hint at, have been often urged by the Edinburgh critics. The reasons, it is not difficult to discover, which make them particularly severe on that performance ; but I have met with more candour and less prejudice elsewhere. Even in Edinburgh, there are many worthy and learned persons, who have done me the honour to approve what I did, with a sincere purpose to advance the cause of truth, and do good to society.

Your good principles and your good heart will secure you against the sneers and sophistries of persons, who dislike religion out of prejudice, and are dissatisfied with the evidence of it, which they do not understand, because they have never examined it. Bear always in mind this truth, which admits

of the most satisfactory proof : no per heart understands Christianity witho to be true ; and no person of a good j studied its evidence, impartially, and v wish that it might be true, who did n it so.

LXXIII. TO SIR WILLIAM FO

Aberdeen, 2d

YOUR manuscript is perfectly safe. it through, and have written a few r slight ones indeed) on the first part have treated of some subjects that a portant, and withal very difficult. Th dence I have chiefly in my eye. You great accuracy and clearness ; but you rather too anxious to get to the bott explain it in such a way as shall leav difficulties unsolved. Now, I presum necessary. The mysteries of Provide haps unsearchable, in some degree, t beings. We are not obliged in thes be *wise above what is written* ; and whether a habit of thinking too deepl points, may not rather tend to dark luminat the understanding. It certai a facility of devising objections, which see they are frivolous, may give us a trouble. I wish my son to believe wha ture declares concerning Providence ; not wish him to enter so far into the ever to be puzzled in his attempts divine decrees with contingency, or

prescience with human liberty. This, however, is only *my* opinion: I would not urge it upon you; and perhaps, if I shall ever regain my former health and spirits, I may have less disinclination to these subjects than I have at present. But I will endeavour to explain myself on this point more intelligibly hereafter.

LXXIV. TO THE REV. MR. CAMERON.

Aberdeen, 4th August, 1776.

I APPROVE greatly of your design of versifying some passages of Scripture, for the enlargement of our psalmody.* You cannot employ your Muse in a way more honourable to yourself, or more useful to your country. The specimen you sent to me I think extremely good. I returned it, as you desired, to the gentleman, after marking, with a pencil, a few criticisms which then occurred to me. You judge very rightly in regard to the style that is most proper in these compositions. It should be perfectly simple and perspicuous, without any quaintness, and free from all superfluous epithets: at the same time, it should be harmonious and elegant, and equally remote from rusticity and affectation. In a word, it should have dignity to please the best judges, and a plainness adapted to the meanest capacity.

I received a letter some time ago, from the secretary of the committee for the enlargement of the

* Dr. Beattie here alludes to a plan then in agitation of an improved poetical version of the Psalms, for the use of the church of Scotland.

psalmody, to which I meant to have returned an answer, but have hitherto been prevented by bad health, and an unusual hurry of business. The business is now almost over, but, unhappily, I have not recovered my health; and therefore, I fear, it will be a considerable time before I be in a condition to write that answer, which will be a pretty long one, and contain some remarks on the several English versions of the Psalms, with a proposal for a new version to be made, by collecting all the best passages of the other versions.

The ground-work of this new version ought, I think, to be that which we now use in the church of Scotland, and which, according to my notions in these matters, is the best that has yet appeared in English; though it is neither so elegant in the language, nor so perspicuous in the meaning, as it might easily be made. Tate and Brady are too quaint, and where the psalmist rises to sublimity (which is very often the case,) are apt to sink into bombast; yet Tate and Brady have many good passages, especially in those psalms that contain simple enunciations of moral truth. Sternhold and Hopkins are in general bad, but have given us a few stanzas that are wonderfully fine, and which ought to be adopted in this new version. Watts, though often elegant, and in many respects valuable, is too paraphrastical: from him, I would propose, that a good deal should be taken; but I would not follow him implicitly. King James's version, which is the basis of that which we use in Scotland, is, considering the age and the author, surprisingly good; and in many places has the advantage of ours, notwithstanding that this was intended as an improve-

ment upon it. Now my scheme is, to take the best passages of these versions, and out of them to make a new version. You say, it would be a motley piece of work, if so many authors were concerned in it. I answer, No, if the collection were judiciously made. Besides, the Psalms themselves are the work of several authors, David, Asaph, Moses, &c. Where then is the absurdity of translating them in the manner I hint at? The version I speak of, I mean only to propose, and give some hints for conducting it; I am not at all qualified for such a work. My ignorance of the Hebrew tongue is alone sufficient disqualification.

I had no hand in the collection of *Paraphrases* of some passages of Scripture, published about twenty or thirty years ago, and sometimes printed in the end of our psalm-books. That collection appeared long before I was of age to attempt any sort of composition, either in verse or prose.

LXXV. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Peterhead, 10th September, 1776.

You judge very rightly of Dr. Campbell's book :* it is, indeed, a most ingenious performance, and contains more curious matter, on certain topics of criticism, than any other book I am acquainted with.

Lord Monboddo's third volume† I have not yet seen. It will certainly be full of learning and ingenuity; but, perhaps, the author's excessive admi-

* Philosophy of Rhetoric.

† Origin and Progress of Language.

admiration of the Greek writers may
 some paradoxes, and make him to
 the merits of modern literature.
 respect for lord Monboddo; I know
 learned and a worthy man; and I a
 cerned to see him adopt some opi
 fear, are not very salutary.

But I know nobody that has less
 yourself to study these authors, wit
 formation of a good style. I beg yo
 me may not so blind you to the fa
 ever to make you think of studying i
 You are pleased to pay me compl
 head, which I do not by any means
 style of my letters, (whatever you a
 not may say,) is not a good style; it
 that accuracy, that ease, or that sin
 it ought to have. Nay, in the prose
 my expression, after all the pains
 about it, is not what I wish it to be:
 pous, and, I fear, too visibly elabor
 is often a harshness and a stiffness i
 would fain avoid, but cannot. Even
 proprieties, I know, I am not proof a
 few people have been more careful t
 them. The longer I study English,
 satisfied that Addison's prose is the
 and if I were to give advice to a you
 subject of English style, I would desi
 that author day and night. I know
 be the opinion of others; but, in my
 that part of my writings, which in
 style has the least demerit, is "*An Es
 ter,*" which is now in the press; y

partiality to it may be owing to this circumstance, that it is the last thing I corrected.

LXXVI. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d January, 1777.

I SHALL not attempt, my dear sir, to tell you, what a transition from grief to happiness I lately experienced, on occasion of your illness and recovery. Your own heart will teach you to conceive it, but I have no words to express it.

The account you give me of your thoughts and feelings, when your disorder was at the height, is very interesting. That *insensibility* which you complain of, and blame yourself for, is, I believe, common 'in all similar cases; and a merciful appointment of Providence it is. By deadening those affections, to which life is indebted for its principal charm, it greatly alleviates the pangs of dissolution. In fact, the pains of death to a man in health appear much more formidable than to a dying man. This, at least, is my opinion; and I have been led into it by what has been observed, of some people's displaying a fortitude, or composure, at the hour of death, who had all their lives been remarkably timorous and weak-minded. The proximate cause of this, I take to be that same *stupor* which gradually steals upon our senses as our dissolution draws near. And that the approach of death should produce this *stupor*, need not surprise us, when we consider, that the approach even of sleep has something of the same effect; and that the keenness of our passions and feelings, in general, depends very much, even when we are in tolerable health, upon

our bodily habit. If sleep is found to be a reason, and give a peculiar wildness to the mind; if memory may be hurt, as it certainly is by a blow on the head; if a superabundance of bodily humours give rise to certain passions of the mind; if drunkenness divest a man of his reason, his character, and even of many of his opinions (for I have known a staunch Roman Catholic who was always a Roman Catholic, and who if even a full meal gives a languor to the mind, and impairs a little his faculties of invention—we have good reason to think that the connexion between our soul and body is very close, and may, therefore, admit the probability of what I now advance; namely, that when the energies of the human body are diminished, near the approach of death, it is scarce probable that the soul should perceive or feel with such acuteness. The *stupor*, therefore, was something in which your will bore a part, the natural and necessary effect of the weakness of the material. I ask pardon for all this, which, however, I cannot conclude without making one remark more; which is, that this doubt ought to be matter of comfort to a good man, as well as an alarm to such as are of a bad character. To the former, it promises a speedy resolution; and it ought to teach the latter that in this place on earth, a death-bed is the best place for devotion or repentance.

You smile, perhaps, at the serious nature of my remarks; but I am led into them by the *letter*, and considering the occasion, I must repeat, that you are a very severe

You are conscious, you say, of many faults which the world does not see in you. But you ought to remember, that every man is frail and fallible; and the virtue even of the best man must, in order to appear meritorious at the great tribunal, have something added to it, which man cannot bestow.

I must put a stop, however, to these grave remarks; and, to descend at once from a very important to a most trifling subject, I shall now speak a word or two concerning my own works.

It is very kind in you to speak so favourably of these "Essays."* You will see I have not laid claim to much originality in these performances. My principal purpose was to make my subject plain and entertaining, and, as often as I could, the vehicle of moral instruction; a purpose to which every part of the philosophy of the human mind; and, indeed, of science in general, may, and ought, in my opinion, to be made in some degree subservient. I was very much on my guard against paradoxes; yet I expect that many of my opinions, those especially that relate to music and classical learning, will meet with opposition. Mr. Tytler* writes me word, that he cannot admit all my doctrine on the subject of music: but, if I rightly understand what he has said very briefly on that subject, I should imagine, that, if he would favour that part of my book with a second perusal, he would find that his notions and mine are not very

* On Poetry and Music, on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition, and on the Utility of Classical Learning.

† Alexander Fraser Tytler, esq. afterwards lord Woodhouselee.

different. To me, indeed, they do not seem to differ at all. I should be sorry if they did; as I believe he knows more of that, as well as of other matters, than I do. I am already sensible of several inaccuracies and defects in my book; for I was in a most miserable state of health when I sent it to the press; and I know not how it is, that I can never judge rightly of my own style till I see it in print. If the book comes to a second edition, and if I have health to make any alterations, there are many things which must be corrected. I should be glad to hear how it takes with your people in general.

You may believe Dr. Porteus's advancement* gives me great pleasure. It was what I did expect, though I am sure he did not. He says in his last letter, "I have reason to believe, that I owe this advancement principally to the goodness of their majesties, who have been graciously pleased to think me deserving of much higher honours than I had ever the presumption to look up to." When I was in England in 1775, the doctor told me, that he was not particularly known to the king at that time; but I told him I had good reason to believe that his majesty esteemed him very highly. Indeed, I know no man that better deserves to wear the mitre. He is not older than I am; and, I think, he looks much younger: but he is exemplary in the discharge of his duty as a clergyman, a cheerful pleasant companion, and of the gentlest manners; he is, withal, an excellent scholar, a most elegant writer, and a man of business. He, and Dr. Hurd,

* To the bishopric of Chester.

bishop of Lichfield,* are, I think, the best preachers I ever heard. Indeed, before I heard them, I cannot say that I distinctly knew what true pulpit-eloquence was. The king seems determined to promote to the episcopal bench such clergymen only as are most distinguished for piety and learning. Dr. Markham, now archbishop of York, and the present bishops of Chester and Lichfield, had not originally any other influence than what their own merit gave them. Dr. Hurd was never at court till he went to kiss the king's hand, on being nominated to the see of Lichfield.

LXXVII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 19th February, 1777.

I HAVE now, my dear sir, read over your papers† with all the attention I am capable of, and have made a few, and a very few, slight remarks in the margin. The perusal has given me very great pleasure, and I beg you will send me the rest as soon as you conveniently can. Every thing you say in regard to the evidence of religion has my most hearty concurrence; one or two sentences or phrases excepted, which are not at all material. What these are, you will see when I return the papers. I am clearly of opinion, that these papers will make a most valuable addition to the book. Mr. Jenyns's late treatise, I observe, is a favourite of yours. There is,

* Afterwards bishop of Worcester.

† "Letters on the Religious Belief and Practical Duties of a Christian," written by sir William Forbes for the instruction of his children.

indeed, a great deal in it of very solid and
 remark; and, I am convinced, it will do
 It were, perhaps, to be wished, that the
 made fewer concessions to the adversar
 ken with more respect of the *external*
 But when one takes up a favourite hy
 argument, it is hardly possible to avoid
 rather too far;—such is the weakness
 nature. I mean not to object to Mr.
 favourite argument; it is surely most sa
 every candid mind; and he has done it
 than any other author I am acquaint
 only wish his plan would have allowed
 upon the external evidences, which ou
 be overlooked by those who would acqui
 as the champions of Christianity. I b
 treatise, some years ago, on the evid
 religion, but have never finished it;
 Mr. J's treatise has in part superseded
 meaning was, to make the subject plai
 taining, and suited to all capacities,
 those of young people. Like Mr. Jenyn
 only a little book: but it must have
 than his, because I would have consid
external and the *internal* evidence.*

LXXVIII. TO DR. PORTEUS, BISHOP O.

2d O

I AM much obliged to your lordship
 pertaining account of the ancient city o

* This he afterwards accomplished in h
 of the Christian Religion," published in 1786

its neighbourhood. It must certainly be, as you observe, well worthy the traveller's attention ; and if ever it is my fortune to revisit the West of England, I shall be inexcusable if I do not direct my course to a place, which I am now, on many accounts, ambitious to be acquainted with.

Of literary matters I can say nothing. The doctor commanded me, on pain of death, to abstain wholly from writing, and to read nothing but novels, or such books as require no attention. I have followed the prescription most punctually ; and, since my fever in the spring, have not written half a dozen pages, (letters included,) nor read any thing but "Don Quixote," Spenser's "Fairy Queen," and "Horace," which last I have read over three times. As I have not read Dr. Robertson's last work, I cannot form any opinion about it. Lord Kaimes has published a book of agriculture, which, they say, is the best of all his works. Dr. Campbell lately printed another excellent sermon, preached at Edinburgh before the "Society for propagating Christian Knowledge." The subject is, "The success of the first preaching of the Gospel a proof of its truth." I shall have the honour to send your lordship a copy of this sermon as soon as I return to Aberdeen. I have read captain Cooke's preface, which gives me a very high opinion of the author : I wish for an opportunity to read the whole book. When a man of sense and spirit publishes the history of his own affairs, the world is a thousand times better instructed than by the most elaborate compositions of the mere book-maker.

LXXIX. TO SYLVESTER DOUGLAS

Aberdeen, 5th .

I AM much entertained with your pl upon the Scottish barbarisms, accent very extensive one ; and, in your h very entertaining and useful. Most you mention, have occasionally engros tion. I have written many sheets up and the structure and rules of our v far the English tongue is attainable Scotland, and in what respects it is r (I mean a person who does not go to land till he is grown up.) I once *publish* something on English prose fication, but, I believe, my literary p over.

The greatest difficulty in acquiri *writing* English, is one of which I heard our countrymen complain of, and never sensible of till I had spent some labouring to acquire that art. It is, to *cular* cast to the English we write. myself. We who live in Scotland study English from books, like a c Accordingly, when we write, we v dead language, which we understand speak ; avoiding, perhaps, all ungrat expressions, and even the barbarisms ; but, at the same time, without comm

• Now lord Glenbervie.

neatness, ease, and softness of phrase, which appears so conspicuously in Addison, lord Lyttelton, and other elegant English authors. Our style is stately and unwieldy, and clogs the tongue in pronunciation, and smells of the lamp. We are slaves to the language we write, and are continually afraid of committing *gross* blunders; and, when an easy, familiar, idiomatical phrase occurs, dare not adopt it, if we recollect no authority, for fear of Scotticisms. In a word, *we* handle English, as a person who cannot fence handles a sword; continually afraid of hurting ourselves with it, or letting it fall, or making some awkward motion that shall betray our ignorance. An English author of learning is the master, not the slave, of his language, and wields it gracefully, because he wields it with ease, and with full assurance that he has the command of it.

In order to get over this difficulty, which I fear is, in some respects, insuperable after all, I have been continually poring upon Addison, the best parts of Swift, lord Lyttelton, &c. The ear is of great service in these matters; and I am convinced the greater part of Scottish authors hurt their style by admiring and imitating one another. At Edinburgh, it is currently said by your critical people, that Hume, Robertson, &c. write English better than the English themselves; than which, in my judgment, there cannot be a greater absurdity. I would as soon believe that Thuanus wrote better Latin than Cicero or Cæsar, and that Buchanau was a more elegant poet than Virgil or Horace. In my rhetorical lectures, and whenever I have occasion to speak on

I am inclined to think, that Erse was once the universal language of Scotland; for you find, all over the Lowlands, that the names of the old places are almost derived from that language. It is remarkable, that on the northern side of that great hollow, or *strath*, which we call the *How of the Mearns*, the names of places are generally Erse, and on the south side English or Saxon. This seems to prove, that the former district was first inhabited, which is, indeed, probable from other circumstances; for it fronts the sun, and is sheltered from the north wind by the Grampian mountains.

LXXX. TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 22d July, 1778.

MR. CRAIG does me too much honour.* I am proud to be thought of so favourably by so ingenious an artist, and by the nephew of a man who was an honour to his country and to mankind; and to whose writings I am under very particular obligations: for if I have any true relish for the beauties of nature, I may say with truth, that it was from Virgil and from Thomson that I caught it. The memory of this amiable poet cannot be dearer to any person than it is to me; and I should be heartily sorry, if the monument, to be erected for

* A project had been formed by Mr. Craig, an architect, and a nephew of Thomson the poet, to erect a monument to his memory; and Dr. Beattie had been requested to write an inscription for it.

him, were not such, in every respect, as he himself would have approved. Mr. Craig will, I am sure, make it such in the architecture; and if he follow his own ideas, in the inscription too. But, since he does me the honour to desire to have my opinion, I shall give it with the greatest sincerity. I think, then, that all public inscriptions, whether intended for tombs, or cenotaphs, or bridges, or any other public building, are made with a view to catch the eye of the traveller, and convey to him, not the wit of the composer, but some authentic information in regard to the object that draws his attention, and is supposed to raise his curiosity. On this principle, all such writings ought to be perfectly simple and true, and as concise as the subject and language will admit. This is the character of the Greek and Roman inscriptions, which it is a pity the moderns have so rarely imitated: for, in my mind, nothing is more barbarous than those mixtures of verse and prose, of Latin and English, of narration and common-place morality, which appear in our churches and church-yards, and other public places. A gothic arch, supported by Corinthian pillars, or a statue with painted cheeks and a hat and wig, is not a greater absurdity. To set up a pillar, with a Latin inscription, for the information of those who understand no language but English, is not less absurd. I never heard of a Greek inscription at Rome, nor of a Latin one at Athens. Latin is, perhaps, a more durable language than English, and may, therefore, be used in those inscriptions that are put on the foundation-stones of bridges, and hid under ground; for these,

it may be presumed, will not be read till a thousand years hence, when all our modern languages will probably be unintelligible. But I cannot but think, that an English inscription, exposed to wind and weather in this climate, will be understood as long as it can be read. I would, therefore, humbly propose, that what is intended for Thomson's monument should be in English, the tongue which he spoke, and to which his writings do so much honour, and the tongue which all travellers who visit Ednam may be supposed to understand: that it should be simple and concise, not in verse, (for this appears more like ostentation of wit than an authentic record,) but in prose, well modulated, totally free from all quaintness, superfluous words, and flowery ornaments,—something to the same purpose with the following, and in a similar style. But observe, that as I do not mean to enter the lists with either of the two great writers* who have already prepared inscriptions for this work, I offer the following rather as a hint towards one, than as a finished performance. And let me remark, by the way, that I have been more devoted to this simplicity of style in public inscriptions, ever since I read a verbose and flowery one in Latin, near the banks of Loch Lomond, to the memory of Dr. Smollett.

* Who these were, does not appear.

And is buried in the Church of Ric

To do honour to the Place o
And as a Testimony of ve
For so amiable a Poet
And so illustrious a King
This Monument* is ere
By his Nephew, *James Craig*,

I would have no quotations or v
nument; and I beg leave to say
which you have taken from the epi
very elegant in the expression as r
though the meaning is good, and pe

I beg my best respects to sir Wil
whom I will write soon, but canno
he will see this letter, I consider n
to you both. I am much obliged t
me so candidly your

easily displeased with any work of mine. I am not sure whether I shall ever publish the letter to Dr. Blair, unless I were to make some additions to it, to justify the preference which I give to the Assembly's metre psalms :* I mean to their plan ; for the execution has all the faults that sir William Forbes mentions. In England, they commonly make use of a corrected edition of Sternhold and Hopkins ; and I confess I must agree with them so far, as to think *that* rudeness, which is the effect of simplicity, more pardonable than those finical embellishments that are owing to affectation. But I cannot, at present, enter upon the reasons that would determine me to reject all paraphrastical additions and flowery ornaments in a version of the Psalms, and adhere to that manly (I ought to have said *divine*) and most expressive simplicity, which characterise the original.

LXXXI. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 2d November, 1778.

DURING this long confinement, I have often been forced to have recourse to my pen and ink, in order to forget my anxiety for a few minutes. But though I could transcribe and correct a little, I was in a very bad state for composition. However, since March last, I have written, in a fair hand, about 370 pages. In this collection, there are (besides other matters) three essays, on "Memory," on "Imagination," and on "Dreaming," on which I set some value. I shall

* That version authorised by the General Assembly of the church of Scotland.

read them to my class very soon : they will make about ten lectures, of an hour each. In treating of Memory and Imagination, I have endeavoured, not only to ascertain their phenomena and laws, but also to propose rules for improving the former faculty, and for regulating the latter. The view I have taken of dreaming is new, so far as I know. I have attempted to trace up some of the appearances of that mysterious mode of perception to their proximate causes; and to prove, that it is, in many respects, useful to the human constitution. On all subjects of this nature, I have constantly received more information from my own experience than from books.

One of the next faculties that come in my way, is conscience, or the moral faculty; on which I have, in writing, a great number of unfinished observations. If I live to finish what I intend on this subject, I shall probably attempt a confutation of several erroneous principles that have been adopted by modern writers of morals, but without naming any names; and it is not unlikely, that I may interweave the substance of what I wrote long ago, at greater length, on the Unchangeableness of Moral Truth. But winter will be over before I can seriously set about it; and, perhaps, the state of my health may oblige me to drop the scheme altogether. However, I do not repent what I have hitherto done, in transcribing and correcting my lectures; for I have been careful to make it an amusement rather than a task; whence I have reason to think, that my health has not been injured by it.

I have been reading lately a most extraordinary

work, which I did read once before, but (I know not how) had totally forgotten: the "History of Benvenuto Cellini," a Florentine goldsmith and designer, translated from the Italian, by Thomas Nugent. There is something in it so singularly characteristical, that it is impossible to reject the whole as fabulous, and yet it is equally impossible not to reject a great part of it as such. To reconcile this, I would suppose that the work itself strongly evinces, that the author must have been an ingenious, hot-headed, vain, audacious man; and that the violence of his passions, the strength of his superstition, and the disasters into which he plunged himself, made him mad in the end. We know that the Italians of the sixteenth century were very ingenious in every thing that relates to drawing and designing; but it cannot be believed that popes, emperors, and kings were so totally engrossed with those matters as signor Cellini represents them. If you have never seen the book, I would recommend it as a curiosity, from which I promise that you will receive amusement. Nay, in regard to the manners of those times, there is even some instruction in it.

LXXXII. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 10th January, 1779.

MAJOR Mercer made me very happy with the news he brought from Gordon-castle, particularly when he assured me that your grace was in perfect health. *He told me, too, that your solitude was at an end*

for some time; which, I confess, I was not sorry to hear. Seasons of recollection may be useful; but when one begins to find pleasure in sighing over Young's "Night's Thoughts" in a corner, it is time to shut the book, and return to the company. I grant that, while the mind is in a certain state, those gloomy ideas give exquisite delight; but their effect resembles that of intoxication upon the body; they may produce a temporary fit of feverish exultation; but qualms, and weakened nerves, and depression of spirits, are the consequence. I have great respect for Dr. Young, both as a man and as a poet; I used to devour his "Night Thoughts" with a satisfaction not unlike that which, in my younger years, I have found in walking alone in a church-yard, or in a wild mountain, by the light of the moon, at midnight. Such things may help to soften a rugged mind; and I believe I might have been the better for them. But your grace's heart is already "too feelingly alive to each fine impulse;" and, therefore, to you I would recommend gay thoughts, cheerful books, and sprightly company: I might have said *company* without any limitation; for wherever you are the company must be sprightly. Excuse this obtrusion of advice. We are all physicians who have arrived at forty; and, as I have been studying the anatomy of the human mind these fifteen years and upwards, I think I ought to be something of a soul-doctor by this time.

When I first read Young, my heart was broken to think of the poor man's afflictions. Afterwards, I took it in my head, that where there was so much lamentation, there could not be excessive suffering;

and I could not help applying to him sometimes those lines of a song,

Believe me, the shepherd but feigns ;
He's wretched, to show he has wit.

On talking with some of Dr. Young's particular friends in England, I have since found that my conjecture was right ; for that, while he was composing the " Night Thoughts," he was really as cheerful as any other man.

I well know the effect of what your grace expresses so properly, of a cold *yes* returned to a warm sentiment. One meets with it often in company ; and, in most companies, with nothing else. And yet it is perhaps no great loss, upon the whole, that one's enthusiasm does not always meet with an adequate return. A disappointment of this sort, now and then, may have upon the mind an effect something like that of the cold bath upon the body ; it gives a temporary shock, but is followed by a very delightful glow as soon as one gets into a society of the right temperature. They resemble, too, in another respect. A cool companion may be disagreeable at first, but in a little time he becomes less so ; and at our first plunge we are impatient to get out of the bath, but if we stay in it a minute or two, we lose the sense of its extreme coldness. Would not your grace think, from what I am saying, or rather preaching, that I was the most social man upon earth ? And yet I am become almost an hermit : I have not made four visits these four months. Not that I am running away, or have any design to run

away, from the world : it is, I rather think, the world that is running away from me.

No character was ever more fully or more concisely drawn than that of major Mercer* by your grace. I was certain you would like him the more the longer you knew him. With more learning than any other man of my acquaintance, he has all the playfulness of a schoolboy ; and unites the wit and the wisdom of Montesquieu with the sensibility of Rousseau, and the generosity of Tom Jones. Your grace has, likewise, a very just idea of Mrs. Mercer. She is most amiable and well-accomplished ; and, in goodness and generosity of nature, is not inferior even to the major himself. I met her the other day, and was happy to find her in better health than I think she has been for some years. This will be most welcome news to the major. Pray, does your grace think that he blames me for not writing to him this great while ? The true reason is, that I have not had this great while any news to send him but what I knew would give him pain ; and therefore I thought it better not to write, especially as we have been in daily expectation of seeing him here these several weeks. Will your grace take the trouble to tell him this ? There is no man to whom I have been so much obliged ; and, with one or two exceptions, there is no man or woman whom I love so well.

* At that time major of the duke of Gordon's regiment.

LXXXIII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th January, 1779.

You are right in your conjecture, that a metrical version of the Psalms, formed upon that plan of mere simplicity which I recommend, would be a very difficult work. 'There is a great deal of cant in the style of poetry, especially of modern poetry: a great number of epithets, and figures, and phrases, which a certain set of versifiers bring in upon all occasions, in order to make out their verses, and prepare their names. If a poet has got a good stock of these, and a knack of applying them, and is not very solicitous about energy, consistency, or truth of sentiment, he may write verses with great ease and fluency; but such verses are not read above once or twice, and are seldom or never remembered. Their tawdry and unnecessary ornaments make them as unwieldy to the memory as a herald's coat of arms to the body. Besides, where language is much ornamented, there is always a deficiency in clearness as well as in force; and, though it may please in its first appearance, it rarely continues long in veneration. The favourite authors in every language are the simplest. They have nothing but what is necessary or useful; and such things are always in the best. My reasons, therefore, for recommending a very simple metrical version of the Psalms, are chiefly these: 1st, Such a version will approach more nearly than an ornamental one to the style of the original; which, I think, will be allowed to be an advantage. 2d, It will be better understood by common people; for, when poetical language is

set off with many ornaments, it must be in a great measure unintelligible to unlearned readers. 3d, It will continue intelligible and in fashion for a much longer time; for such is the natural and necessary effect of elegant plainness. 4th, It will take a faster hold of the memory. One of my reasons for tolerating a metrical version of the Psalms is, that it makes them more easily remembered: and Horace, when speaking on a subject not unlike this, has very well observed,

Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat:

Superfluities of style perish from the memory like water poured into a vessel that is already full. 5th, The simplicity I contend for requires a concise expression, and consequently conveys much meaning in few words; and this is particularly necessary in words intended to be sung with understanding: for singing is of necessity (or at least ought to be) slower than speaking; and, therefore, if the matter is not very close, it will happen sometimes that the singer shall be sounding notes to which his mind annexes no definite idea. One of my objections to Merrick's Psalms would be (if they are all like the specimen you favoured me with) their unnecessary and paraphrastical diffuseness. His first psalm consists of thirty-four lines; and yet I am certain, that the whole meaning of that psalm might, with equal harmony, with equal elegance, and with superior clearness, be expressed in twenty-four. Tate and Brady's second psalm consists of forty-eight lines, and my version of that psalm of thirty-six: if the two versions be in all other respects *only equal*,

believe that which has fewest words would be thought the better. The last reason I shall assign, that the modish tricks and ornaments of verse appear to me not very graceful in serious poetry of any sort; but in sacred poetry I consider them as worse than ungraceful, as even *indecent*. A high-priest of the Jews, officiating at the altar in ruffles and a laced waistcoat, or a clergyman in the pulpit, with the airs and dress of a player, are incongruities of the same kind with these, which, in a poetical version of the Psalms, ought to be avoided. Is it right, think you, for a Christian on Sunday, in the church, to sing,

His rains from heaven parch'd hills recruit,
That soon transmit the liquid store;
Till Earth is burthen'd with her fruit,
And Nature's lap can hold no more?

The harshness of the first line, and the half nonsense of the first couplet, might be excused; but what shall we say to the Pagan allusion in the last line?

After what you know of my mind on this subject, I am sure I need not say, that it is far from my purpose to recommend a rude or clownish simplicity, whereof I confess that there are innumerable instances in the version that is in most common use in Scotland; and yet, in the present case, rusticity is better than finicalness. I would rather see in the pulpit a sun-burnt face than a painted one; and a coat out at elbows than one overlaid with embroidery. The middle way, you will say, is best; and I allow it: and, between ourselves, I think it

peculiarly honourable to the church of that, while she keeps at a distance from geantries of the Romish church, she also a ritual, which might do very well with pur but which is too apt to produce listless coldness in creatures weighed down with blood. I would have every thing neat and as elegant as is consistent with plain the public services and in the language of or, if now and then I were to introduce pomp, which I believe I should often be in do, I would still make it simple and plain if I mistake not, would heighten its maj and give permanency to its effects. Elaborate pure simplicity is the characteristic of pulpit-style, as it is now established by models, both ancient and modern; the holds true of the prayers of the church of only these have (what they ought to have) thing of a more elaborate and more dign position than becomes the sermon.

I know not whether there be any thing in my papers on the "Origin of Evil," and "Ends of Christianity." It will be a long time before I get forward to those subjects; present I confine myself to such as are most useful, and, withal, least connected with those to which I formerly engrossed me to a degree that was unwholesome to my health. How much my mind has been relieved by certain speculations you will partly guess. I will tell you a fact, that is now unknown in the world,—that, since the "Essay on Truth" was printed in quarto, in the summer of 1790, I never *dared* to read it over. I durst not

the sheets, to see whether there were any errors in the print, and was obliged to get a friend to do that office for me. Not that I am in the least dissatisfied with the sentiments: every word of my own doctrine I do seriously believe; nor have I ever seen any objections to it which I could not easily answer. But the habit of anticipating and obviating arguments, upon an abstruse and interesting subject, came in time to have dreadful effects upon my nervous system; and I cannot read what I then wrote without some degree of horror, because it recalls to my mind the horrors that I have sometimes felt, after passing a long evening in those severe studies. You will perhaps understand me better when I have told you a short story. One who was on board the Centurion, in Lord Anson's voyage, having got some money in that expedition, purchased a small estate, about three miles from this town. I have had several conversations with him on the subject of the voyage, and once asked him whether he had ever read the history of it? He told me, he had read all the history, except the description of their sufferings during the run from Cape Horn to Juan Fernandez, which, he said, were so great, that he durst not recollect or think of them.

LXXXIV. TO THE REV. DR. LAING.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1779.

I LATELY met with what I consider as a great curiosity in the musical way. Take the history as follows: Mary, the consort of king William, was a great admirer of a certain Scots tune, which in

England they call *Cold and Raw*, but in Scotland is better known by the name of *Morning early*. One day, at her private where Purcel presided, the queen interrupted music, by desiring one Mrs. Hunt, who was to sing the ballad of *Cold and Raw*. The it; and it is said that Purcel was a little being obliged to sit idle at his harpsichord having his own compositions interrupted for the sake of such a trifle. The queen's birth soon after, when Purcel, who composed music for that solemnity, in order either to please the queen, or to surprise her, or merely to his own humour, made *Cold and Raw* the one of the songs. This anecdote I met with months ago; and my author added, that the said song was printed in Purcel's "*Orpheus tannicus*." I had a great desire to see it, that I might know how such a genius would express himself when confined in such trammels; for all my high opinion of Purcel, I expected that a song composed on such a subject would be a good one; but I am agreeably disappointed. The song, or hymn, (for it is in the character of a hymn), in my opinion, excellent. I enclose a copy that you may judge for yourself. It will perhaps, strike you at first; but, when you have read it over five or six times, you will like it. There is something of a very original composition.

LXXXV. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 1st February, 1779.

I SINCERELY sympathise with you on the death of Mr. Garrick. I know not how his friends in London will be able to bear the loss of him, for he was the most delightful companion in the world. On the stage nobody could admire him more than I did; and yet I am not sure whether I did not admire him still more in private company. What a splendid career he has run! idolized as he has been by the public, as well as by his friends, for almost half a century; happy in his fortune and in his family; superior to envy, invulnerable by detraction; and yet nobody who knew him will say that his good fortune was greater than his merit.

I have just received the Notes on Potter's "Æschylus;" by which, I am happy to find that my opinion of that translation is ratified by yours. I did not think it possible to do justice to the old Grecian in any modern tongue; but Mr. Potter has satisfied me that I was mistaken. It seems to me, that this is indisputably the best translation that ever appeared in English of any Greek poet. I beg, madam, you will exert all your influence with the author, to make him go on with "Euripides."

LXXXVI. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 22d February, 1779.

friends in England are all in tears for poor Garrick. In his own sphere he was certainly the

greatest man of his time ; and, since I knew him, I have always thought, that in private company his talents were not less admirable than upon the stage. There was a playfulness in his humour, and a solidity in his judgment, which made him at once a most delightful and most instructive associate. After passing part of two days with him at his house at Hampton, I once intended to have addressed to him a copy of verses, in which I had actually made some progress ; but something interposed to prevent me. The thought, as I remember, was to this purpose : that in him the soul of Shakspeare had revived, after undergoing, in the other world, a purification of one hundred years ; for that was the exact space of time between the death of Shakspeare and the birth of Garrick. Kindred spirits they certainly were. Shakspeare was never thoroughly understood till Garrick explained him. Both were equally great in tragedy and in comedy ; and yet for comedy both had evidently a predilection.

LXXXVII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 10th April, 1779.

I HAVE at last made good my promise in regard to the Scotticisms, and send you enclosed a little book, containing about two hundred, with a praxis at the end, which will perhaps amuse you. I printed it for no other purpose but to give away to the young men who attend my lectures. This collection I have been making, from time to time, for some years past. I consulted Mr. Hume's list, and took a few from it. Mr. Elphinston's book I also looked

into, (that book, I mean, which he wrote either for or against lord Kaimes) and it supplied me with three or four: but Elphinston is mistaken in many things, and his own style is not free from Scotticism; which, however, is one of his least faults; for so affected and enigmatical is his phraseology, that he cannot be said to have a style at all. Dr. Campbell gave me about a dozen. The rest are the result of my own observation. I shall in time, I believe, collect as many more as will be a supplement to this pamphlet; for they are endless. Even since these came from the press, I have recollected a few others, which you will find in the postscript. I am not positive that every one of my remarks are right; but I intend to send them to a learned friend in England, who will correct what is amiss. If any material amendment is made, I shall inform you of it.

Your opinion of bishop Lowth's "Isaiah" coincides exactly with mine. It is equal to my highest expectations, and does honour to our age and nation. I wish the learned prelate may proceed in his pious undertaking, and give us as many of the other books of Scripture as his other duties will leave him at leisure to revise. I made two or three trifling remarks on the language of his translation, in which there are some peculiarities that I cannot account for. To *hist* (meaning to call with a whistle) is a word which I never before met with either in print or in conversation, and which, indeed, I should not have understood, if the author had not explained it in his notes: I suspect it may be provincial. *Hæx*, too, and *cyon*, are a sort of technical words, the one belonging to botany, the other to gardening; and,

harmony of particular pas
more melodious than the
seems to be the effect of
art : " Man that is born of
and full of trouble. He c
and is cut down ; he fleetl
continueth not." Virgil hi
the following passage, for
mony ; and yet every wor
is not the least appearance
tion : " My beloved spake,
up, my love, my fair one, a
the winter is past, the rain
flowers appear on the earth
of birds is come ; and the
heard in our land. The fig
green figs, and the vines wi
a good smell Arise my

words of one syllable are certainly harsh, as *which*, *such*, *scratch*, &c. ; but even these lose a great part of their disagreeable sound, when the words that come before and after them are properly modulated.

You would hear, no doubt, of the death of Mr. Riddoch, one of the ministers of our English chapel. As I think I have heard you say that you liked those few sermons which he published some years ago,* I shall take the liberty to inform you, that his widow, whom he has left in very poor circumstances, intends to publish two volumes of his sermons by subscription, and has asked that Dr. Campbell and I would revise the manuscripts ; which, considering her distress, and his merit, both as a man and as a preacher, we did not decline.

LXXXVIII. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON. .

Aberdeen, 27th May, 1779.

I REJOICE in the good weather, in the belief that it extends to Glenfiddich;† where I pray that your grace may enjoy all the health and happiness that good air, goats' whey, romantic solitude, and the society of the loveliest children in the world, can bestow. May your days be clear sunshine, and may a gentle rain give balm to your nights, that the flowers and birch-trees may salute you in the

* Six occasional Sermons on important subjects, by James Riddoch, A. M. one of the ministers of St. Paul's chapel, Aberdeen, published in 1762.

† A hunting-seat of the duke of Gordon's, in the heart of the Grampian mountains.

morning with all their fragrance! May the kids frisk and play tricks before you with unusual sprightliness; and may the song of birds, the hum of bees, and the distant waterfall, with now and then the shepherd's horn resounding from the mountains, entertain you with a full chorus of Highland music!

My imagination had parcelled out the lovely glen into a thousand little paradises; in the hope of being there, and seeing every day, in that solitude, what is

Fairer than famed of old, or fabled since,
Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide
By errant knights,

But the information you received at Cluny gave a check to my fancy, and was indeed a great disappointment to Mrs. Beattie and me; not on account of the goats' whey, but because it keeps us so long at such a distance from your grace.

LXXXIX. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 12th June, 1779.

You are extremely welcome to as many copies of the *Scotticisms* as you please: I shall send a parcel by the first opportunity. But I would not wish the pamphlet to be exposed to the censure of critics, who know not the peculiar circumstances of the persons for whose use it was intended. I printed it for the improvement of those young men only who attend my lectures; who are generally of the North country, and many of whom have had no opportu-

nity of learning English from the company they kept. To have confined myself, therefore, to such idioms as may actually be found in printed books, or to such as are current to the south as well as the north of Scotland, would not have answered my purpose. There are in the list, as you justly observe, some phrases, which are not often heard among the better sort of our people; but, in this country, they are, in fact, used by many above the rank of the vulgar, and are sometimes mistaken for English, because they may be seen in English books, though in a different sense: such is *misguide* for *sully*, ill to *guide* for ill to *manage*, &c. *Wrongous* and *iniquous* are very common among Scottish lawyers. In a word, I might, no doubt, have omitted several of those that are inserted; and would, probably, have done so, if I had not known by experience, that phrase-books, vocabularies, and dictionaries, are oftener faulty from defect than from redundancy.

Negatives are hard to prove, especially in language. A good phrase is established by a quotation from a good author: but to say of a phrase, that it is a Scottish idiom, is to say, that, though used in Scotland, it occurs not in any English writer of classical authority; a point which, in many cases, it will be no easy matter to evince. There may be errors, therefore, in my pamphlet; it would be strange indeed if there were none; but it may have its use for all that. Old Dr. * * * * * used to tell me, that he formerly belonged to a club in Edinburgh where nothing but Latin was spoken; and that when appeals were made to Mr. Ruddi-

man,* (who was a sort of oracle among them,) he would give his opinion very readily and decisively, when he thought the Latin good; but was slow to pronounce concerning any phrases which had the appearance of Latin, that they were bad. And I remember, that Walker, in his excellent "Treatise on English Particles," makes a remark to the same purpose, and gives a list of Latin phrases from the best authors, which one, who was not well read in the classics, would, without hesitation, pronounce to be Anglicisms.

XC. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 17th June, 1779.

I HAVE been reading Johnson's prefaces to the English edition of the poets, which poor Dilly sent me in exchange for the Edinburgh edition. There are many excellent things in the prefaces, particularly in the lives of Milton, Dryden, and Waller. He is more civil to Milton than I expected, though he hates him for his blank verse and his politics. To the forced and unnatural conceits of Cowley I think he is too favourable; and I heartily wish, that, instead of the poems of this poet, which are printed at full length, and fill two large volumes, he had given us "The Faery Queen" of Spenser, which is left out, very absurdly, I think. He has brought his lives no further down than to Hughes; but I hear he intends to give the remainder as soon as he can.

* The grammarian.

XCI. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 22d June, 1779.

I CONGRATULATE your grace, with all my heart, on the safe arrival of one of the best and most beautiful boys that ever was born.* It gave me the most sincere 'pleasure to see him so well, so mindful of all his old friends, and so impatient to get forward to the Glen.†

And here your grace will pardon me for expressing a wish, that the marquis were attended by a man of learning, in quality of tutor, as well as by Mr. S * * * *, who is, to be sure, in every respect but one, the best man in the world for his purpose. Many an English clergyman would, with transport, resign his cure, in order to undertake so pleasing an employment: and I think the tutor ought, by all means, to be an Englishman, regularly educated; and to be recommended either by the archbishop of York, or by Dr. Barnard, provost of Eton, whom I look upon as the best judges now in the world of the qualifications requisite in a teacher. I beg your grace will think of this.

I will not attempt to describe what I suffered from the cruel necessity which compelled me to decline your grace's invitation. My regret was such, and the cause of that regret is so great a weight on my spirits, that I believe even Adam Smith himself, if he were to know it, would almost

* The marquis of Huntley.

† Glenfiddich.

pity me.* Mrs. Beattie has been a little better for this week past; and bids me say, that though she is obliged to give up all thoughts of the Glen for this season, she still hopes to be happy in Gordon castle before the end of autumn. She now goes out once a day in a chaise; but if the airing exceeds two miles, she is fatigued with it. I would faintly hope, that, when she is a little accustomed to this exercise, she may be able to undertake a little journey, which I am sure would be of infinite service to her.

I have made several visits of late to the Den of Rubislaw,† and find a charm in it which I was never sensible of before. One evening it appeared in dreadful majesty; for it was so thick a fog that I could hardly see the tops of the trees, or even the cliffs; and so I was at liberty to fancy them as high and as wild as I pleased. But the more I indulge myself in that solitude, the more I regret my distance from another,‡ which I hear is admirable for the beauties of still life, and of which I know how much it excels all other solitudes for every other species of beauty. I still flatter myself with the hope of assisting, one time or other, some of your grace's morning lectures. Pray remember your promise of sending me the history of a day.

I have a little story to tell your grace, and

* In this passage he alludes to Dr Smith's doctrine of *Sympathy*.

† A romantic woody spot, near Aberdeen.

‡ Glenfiddich.

favour to ask ; which will give you the trouble of another letter in a post or two.

XCII. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 25th June, 1779.

AN extraordinary book has just now appeared in this country : but, before I say any thing of it, I must trouble you with a short narrative.

During the last years of Mr. Hume's life, his friends gave out, that he regretted his having dealt so much in metaphysics, and that he never would write any more. He was at pains to disavow his "Treatise of Human Nature," in an advertisement which he published about half a year before his death. All this, with what I then heard of his bad health, made my heart relent towards him ; as you would no doubt perceive by the concluding part of the preface to my quarto book. But, immediately after his death, I heard that he had left behind him two manuscripts, with strict charge that they should be published by his executors ; one, "The History of his Life," and the other, "Dialogues on Natural Religion." This last was said to be more sceptical than any of his other writings. Yet he had employed the latter part of his life in preparing it. The copy which I have was sent me two days ago by my friend and neighbour Dr. Campbell ; than whom no person better understands the tendency and the futility of Mr. Hume's philosophy, and who accompanied it with a note, in the following words : "You have probably not yet seen this posthumous performance of David Hume. As the publisher, with whom I am

not acquainted, has favoured me with a copy, have sent it to you for your perusal; and shall be glad to have your opinion of it after you have read it. For my part, I think it too dry, and too metaphysical, to do much hurt; neither do I discover any thing new or curious in it. It serves but as a sort of commentary to the 'Dialogues on Natural Religion and Providence,' published in his lifetime. What most astonishes me, is the zeal which this publication shows for disseminating those sceptical principles."

In my answer to Dr. Campbell's note, I told him "that I was happy to find, from his account, that the book was not likely to do much harm; that I would acquiesce in his judgment of it, which I was persuaded was just; but that at present my circumstances, in regard to health and spirits, would not permit me to enter upon the study of it."

Are you not surprised, madam, that any man should conclude his life (for Mr. Hume knew he was dying) with preparing such a work for the press? Yet Mr. Hume must have known, that, the opinion of a great majority of his readers, his reasonings, in regard to God and Providence, were most pernicious, as well as most absurd. Nay, he himself seemed to think them dangerous. This appears from the following fact, which I had from Dr. Gregory. Mr. Hume was boasting to the doctor, that, among his disciples in Edinburgh, he had the honour to reckon many of the fair sex. "No, do not tell me," said the doctor, "whether, if you had a wife or a daughter, you would *wish* them to be your disciples? Think well before you answer me; for I assure you, that, whatever your answer is, I w

not conceal it." Mr. Hume, with a smile, and some hesitation, made this reply: "No; I believe scepticism may be too sturdy a virtue for a woman." Miss Gregory* will certainly remember that she has heard her father tell this story. How different is doctor Gregory's "Legacy"† to Mr. Hume's!

Do me the favour, madam, to let me know that you are well; that your nephew is just such as I wish him to be; and that the duchess-dowager of Portland, Mrs. Delany, Mrs. Carter, sir Joshua Reynolds, and our other friends, are all in good health. I never pass a day, nor (I believe) an hour of the day, without thinking of them, and wishing them all imaginable happiness. Sometimes I flatter myself with the hope of seeing you all once more before I die: it is a pleasing thought; but,

Shadows, clouds, and darkness, rest upon it.

How shall I thank you, madam, for all your goodness! Your refusal to accept of any indemnification for the expense of my advertisements, is a new instance. I am ashamed, and know not what to say. *Dii tibi—et mens sibi conscia recti, præmia digna ferant.*

* Daughter of the late Dr. John Gregory, afterwards married to the Rev. Mr. Allison.

† "A Father's Legacy to his Daughters."

XCIII. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 5th July, 1779.

I NOW sit down to make good the threatening denounced in the conclusion of a letter, which I had the honour to write to your grace about ten days ago. The request I am going to make I should preface with many apologies, if I did not know, that the personage to whom I address myself is too well acquainted with all the good emotions of the human heart, to blame the warmth of a school-boy attachment, and too generous to think the worse of me for wishing to assist an unfortunate friend.

Three weeks ago, as I was scribbling in my garret, a man entered, whom at first I did not know; but, on his desiring me to look him in the face, I soon recollected an old friend, whom I had not seen, and scarcely heard of, these twenty years. He and I lodged in the same house, when we attended the school of Laurencekirk, in the year 1747. I was then about ten years old, and he about fifteen. As he took a great liking to me, he had many opportunities of obliging me, having much more knowledge of the world, as well as more bodily strength, than I. He was, besides, an ingenious mechanic, and made for me many little things: and it must not be forgotten, that he first put a violin in my hands, and gave me the only lessons in music I ever received. Four years after this period, I went to college, and he engaged in farming. But our acquaintance was renewed about five years after, when I remembered he made me the confident of a passion he had for the greatest beauty in

that part of the country, whom he soon after married.

I was very glad to see my old friend so unexpectedly ; and we talked over many old stories, which, though interesting to us, would have given little pleasure to any body else. But my satisfaction was soon changed to regret, when, upon inquiring into the particulars of his fortune during these twenty years, I found he had been very unsuccessful. His farming projects had miscarried ; and, happening to give some offence to a young woman, who was called the housekeeper of a gentleman on whom he depended, she swore she would be revenged, to his ruin ; and was as good as her word. He satisfied his creditors, by giving them all his substance ; and, retiring to a small house in Johnshaven,* made a shift to support his family by working as a joiner ; a trade which, when a boy, he had picked up for his amusement. But a consumptive complaint overtook him ; and though he got the better of it, he has never since been able to do any thing that requires labour, and can now only make fiddles, and some such little matters, for which there is no great demand in the place where he lives. He told me, he had come to Aberdeen on purpose to put me in mind of our old acquaintance, and see whether I could do any thing for him. I asked, in what respect he wished me to serve him. He would do any thing, he said, for his family, that was not dishonourable : and, on pressing him a little further, I found that the height of his ambition was to be a tide-waiter, a land-waiter, or an officer of excise.

* A small fishing-town in the county of Kineardine.

I told him, it was particularly unlucky that not the least influence, or even acquaintance, any one commissioner, either of the excise or tithes; but, as I did not care to discourage him, I promised to think of his case, and to do what I could. I have since seen a clergyman, who knew my friend very well, and describes his condition still more forlorn than he had represented it.

It is in behalf of this poor man that I now venture to implore your grace's advice and assistance. I am well aware, that, though his case is very interesting to me, there is nothing extraordinary in it; and that your grace must often be solicited by others in like circumstances. It is, therefore, with the utmost reluctance that I have taken this liberty. If your grace thinks, that an application from me to Mr. Baron Gordon might be sufficient to procure one of the offices in question for my friend, I do not wish you to have any trouble; but if my application were enforced by yours, it would have a better chance to succeed. This, however, I do not request, if it is not so easy to your grace as almost a matter of indifference.

By the first convenient opportunity I have sent your grace a sort of curiosity—four epistles pastorals, by a Quaker:—not one of our Quakers of Scotland, but a true English Quaker, who uses *thee* and *thou*, and comes into a room, and sits down in company without taking off his hat. In all this, he is a very worthy man, an excellent scholar, a cheerful companion, and a particular friend of mine. His name is John Scott, of Ware, Hertfordshire, where he lives in an elegant retirement, (for his fortune is very

and has dug, in a chalk-hill near his house, one of the most curious grottos I have ever seen. As it is only twenty miles from London, I would recommend it to your grace, when you are there, as worth going to visit. Your grace will be pleased with his Pastorals, not only on account of their morality and sweet versification, but also for their images and descriptions, which are a very exact picture of the groves, woods, waters, and wind-mills of that part of England where he resides.

XCIV. TO MAJOR MERCER.

Aberdeen, 1st October, 1779.

I BETOOK myself to the reading of Cæsar when I was at Peterhead, for I happened to have no other book. I had forgot a great deal of him ; and scarce remembered any thing more than the opinion which I formed of his style, about twenty-five years ago. But when I began, I found it almost impossible to leave off. There is nothing in the historical style more perfect ; and his transactions are a complete contrast to the military affairs of these times. I know not which of his talents I should most admire : his indefatigable activity and perseverance ; his intrepidity and presence of mind, which never fail him even for a moment ; his address as a politician ; his ability as a commander, in which he seems to me to have no equal ; or the beauty, brevity, clearness, and modesty of his narrative. I understand all his battles as well as if I had seen them : and, in half a sentence, he explains to me the grounds and occasions of a war more fully than a modern historian could do in fifty pages of narra-

tive, and as many more of dissertation. In a word, as the world at that time stood in need of an absolute sovereign, I am clearly of opinion, that he should have been the person. Pompey was a vain coxcomb, who, because a wrong-headed faction had given him the title of *Magnus*, foolishly thought himself the greatest of men; Cassius was a male-content, and a mere demagogue; and Brutus was the dupe of a surly philosophy, operating upon an easy temper. I ask pardon for troubling you with this, which you understand so much better than I do: but I am quite full of Cæsar at present; and you know, "what is nearest the heart is nearest the mouth."

XCV. TO DR. PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Aberdeen, 17th December, 1779.

ABOUT three months ago, a lady, who is a great admirer of bishop Butler, put into my hands a manuscript charge of that excellent prelate to the clergy of the diocese of Durham. If it is not in his printed works, I doubt whether it was ever published; but no person, who is acquainted with Butler's manner, could read half a page without being satisfied that it is genuine. I was so well pleased with it, that I had thoughts of printing it in a small pamphlet; but domestic troubles have so disconcerted me, that I am hardly capable of any thing. If your lordship is curious to see it, I believe I could easily procure a MS. copy. Let me again make it my request, that you would collect all your printed pieces, and give them to the world in one publication.

I think I told your lordship in my last, that, in order to keep my mind from preying upon itself, and to give it a sufficiency of such employment as would amuse the fancy, without affecting the heart, I had resolved to finish a grammatical treatise, which I had begun some considerable time ago. It is now finished, and makes one of my largest treatises. It consists of two parts; the first, "On the Origin and general Nature of Speech;" the second, "On Universal Grammar." I have drawn a good deal of information from Mr. Harris's "Hermes," and lord Monboddo on "Language;" but my plan and my sentiments differ in many particulars from both. Monboddo's partiality to the Epicurean hypothesis of the origin of language and society, I thought it incumbent upon me to animadvert upon; and I hope I have shown that it is ill founded.

I have never seen lord Monboddo's "Ancient Metaphysics." He and I have long been particularly acquainted. Formerly we used to disagree a little on the subject of religion; but I hear he has become more cautious on that head. He carries his admiration of Aristotle, and the abstruser parts of the Greek philosophy, to a degree of extravagance that is hardly credible. Herodotus is his favourite historian; and so far is he from thinking, with the rest of the world, that he is credulous, that he seems to think him infallible in all matters, which he says he had an opportunity of inquiring into. He believes in the existence of satyrs, and men with the heads of dogs, and other Egyptian monsters; and he and I have had many a controversy concerning men with tails, whom he firmly believes to exist, not only in the islands of

Nicobar in the Gulf of Bengal country. He holds that men are brutes; from which he infers, that man is by nature a social animal. The government and discipline he admires in all other nations. Whether he is induct towards the Helots, I do not know. I have heard him seriously maintain that the state that is most proper for man and the cattle ought to be the same, and bought and sold along with the cattle. Horace as a philosopher, and Virgil as a poet, but his opinion of Latin literature for I have heard him say, that the Roman law, there is hardly an opinion that merits preservation.

Notwithstanding these strange opinions, some of which are the result of error rather than censure, lord Montagu is a worthy, and friendly man, in every respect, and kind to his tenants; agreeable and jocose in conversation, and well bred. Mr. Harris's "He is a man who, upon studying the Greek; and who has led him to the most insignificant part of the science, "The Analytics and Metaphysics," which he has studied so long, and is now seriously of opinion, that it is not to be studied.

XCVI. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th January, 1780.

IN my present condition, it is natural for me to think what is likely to befall my family when I leave it. The affairs I have to settle are not extensive or complex: I have taken the liberty to give you some concern in them.

About a month ago, I executed a deed, with all the necessary formalities, in which I named you, my dear sir, with some other friends, tutors and curators for my two boys. I ought, no doubt, to have informed you of this sooner; but I know you will excuse me. This deed I consider as the most, and indeed as the only, material part of my settlements. It is scarce necessary for one to make a will, who wishes his children to be on an equal footing, in regard to inheritance; and whose property consists chiefly in a little money and some moveables. I hope I shall leave them what may keep them from being a burden on any body, and what, with strict economy, may afford them the means of an education somewhat better than I received myself. Friends may be necessary to help them forward a little in the world; and I trust in Providence that those will not be wanting. Will you indulge me in the freedom of saying a word or two more on this subject?

My first wish, in regard to my two boys, is, that they may be good Christians, and, in one way or another, useful in society. Of the younger I can say nothing, as I know not his character. The

elder is much addicted to learning, of per, and excellent capacity; but his delicate, and I do not think him made of life: I have, therefore, had thought him appointed, when he comes to be assistant and successor; provided he has then have no objection to that way from my experience in teaching, the to take of his education, and the farra which I have got together on moral flattered myself, that I might make him that employment in a way creditable and not unprofitable to society. But th not be brought to bear these eight or and I cannot hope for so long a life have observed, that plans laid so early are seldom or never made effectual. is a scene of business still more tranquil and that, I presume, would not be di him. But this is mere conjecture.

Be assured, that it would do me good could flatter myself with the hope of v burgh in the spring, and giving you t my person and papers; not to mention I should take in seeing my friends; of not give them any assurances. I am I have already lived too long in solitude I mean, for one who loves society and as I do, and always have done. No more constant to his cave than I have house for these eighteen months. T of my house, and the delicacy of Mrs. which cannot bear the least noise, v me to have any company with me;

that there are only two houses in the town I am ever invited. In fact, I have not had more than twice these three months. I am able to go to the college again, my here gives me some amusement through but all the long evening I sit alone, trying to read, and sometimes to write, except when when I give my son a lesson in Virgil. It in the end have very bad effects upon my spirits; and, therefore, it is no wonder to be from home, and to sojourn for a time in a land of friendship, tranquillity, and usefulness. My first excursion (if I ever) must be to Gordon-castle.

Grammatical Treatise," which I told you of. It is one of the longest, and not one of my dissertations. I have also written you were here, "Remarks on Sublimity," not of counterpart to those on "Laughter;" not quite pleased with this, nor has it ready last hand. I believe I shall next set to writing what I formerly threw together on "Writing and Chivalry;" not because it is so, but because it is amusing, and will require study. It is pretty long too; and, in my dull way, will be an object to me for at least two years in a word, my posthumous works (for post-believe I may call them) will soon be as voluminous as those I have printed. I must be tranquil or other of my old scrawls; and when one dies, one enlarges and corrects insensibly. I do not think; I am too much agitated and as Lord Chesterfield would say) to read any thing is not very desultory; I cannot play at

cards,—I could never learn to smoke,—and my musical days are over.

It gives me great pain to hear of the fate of poor Cook. I lately read his voyage for the second time; and considered him not only as an excellent writer, an able philosopher, and the most consummate navigator that ever lived, but also as a person of the greatest magnanimity, modesty, and humanity. He was, indeed, one of my greatest favourites; and I look upon his death as an irreparable loss to his country and to mankind.

XCVII. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 19th March, 1780.

As I sincerely sympathised with your grace on the occasion of your late uneasiness, it is with the greatest pleasure I now send my congratulations on the good news from Rodney; by which you will see, that your brother's laurels, instead of being as you apprehended, stained with blood, are decorated with gold. For the sake of your grace, as well as of his country, I pray, that the same success may attend him wherever he goes; and that your tenderness and anxiety may soon receive their reward in his safe return. When I consider life that those lead who are engaged in the service of their country, the busy and merry faces which they are continually surrounded, and the tumultuous hopes, and that bustle of employments which keep their minds and bodies in constant exercise—I cannot but think their state much enviable than that of the affectionate friend, they leave behind them at full leisure to

ply all their real dangers, and to imagine a others that will never have any reality.

greatly obliged to your grace for the little h the great name. At the first reading I thoroughly understand it; but at the second it well: and I agree with your grace, author shows a capacity for much better There is something waggish enough, as uncommon, in the moral; but, in the preface are some thoughts and expressions not feminine as I could have wished. "Read or go hang yourself," is not like the language of a fair lady; any more than what she says being drowned in Mr. Walpole's champagne: perhaps, she wished it to be thought a masquerade performance.*

I am happy that your grace approves of my treatise on "Dreaming."† The publisher has never fulfilled any desire to have the sequel, and, therefore, has not sent it. I suspect he may think it unsuitable for his paper. Your grace seems to think that I should avow more faith in dreams, if I think it for the good of mankind that they should be allowed. I confess there is something in this: in proof, I beg leave to transcribe the concluding paragraph:

to conclude: Providence certainly superintends the affairs of men; and often (we know not how often) interposes for our preservation. It

above alluded to was probably one published privately, and understood to have been written by Lady Dowager margravine of Anspach.

It was sent to the periodical publication called the "Edinburgh Review," published at Edinburgh.

would, therefore, be presumptuous to affirm, *the* supernatural cautions, in regard to futurity, *are* never communicated in dreams. The design of this discourse is, not to contradict any authentic experience, or historical fact, but only to show, that dreams may proceed from a variety of causes which have nothing supernatural; that our waking thoughts are often equally unaccountable; that, therefore, a superstitious attention to the former is not less absurd than a like attention to the latter would be; and that, though we are not much acquainted with the nature of this wonderful mode of perception, we know enough of it to see, that it is not useless or superfluous; but may, on the contrary, answer some purposes of great importance to our welfare, both in soul and body." *

In the course of my walks, I straggled the other day into the Den of Rubislaw: but, whether it was owing to the stormy weather, or to the gloom of my own thoughts, I soon found it was not a fit place for me at that time. Instead of sighing and murmuring, the naked trees seemed to roar in the wind, and the black stream to rumble and growl through the rocks; and, therefore, as I did not wish to detain even the *idea* of your grace in *so* dreary a wilderness, I made haste to leave it. Two months hence it will be more pleasing, and, it is possible, I may then be more capable of being pleased.

* What Dr. Beattie intended as a third number of a "Mirror" on "Dreaming," was not printed when that paper was published in single numbers. But it was added as a sequel to the seventy-fourth paper, when the "Mirror" was afterwards reprinted in volumes.

XCVIII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 11th April, 1780.

I HAVE, since the college broke up, been hard at work upon Mr. Riddoch's manuscript sermons; but I have only got through five of them, and there are still five-and-twenty before me. Never did I engage in a more troublesome business. There is not a sentence, there is hardly a line, that does not need correction. This is owing partly to the extreme inaccuracy of the writing, but chiefly to the peculiarity of the style; an endless string of climaxes; the involution of clauses within clauses; the unmeasurable length of the sentences; and such a profusion of superfluous words, as I have never before seen in any composition. To cure all these diseases is impossible. I must be satisfied with alleviating some of the worst symptoms: yet, to do my old friend justice, I must confess, that the sermons have, in many places, great energy, and even eloquence, and abound in shrewd remarks and striking sentiments. They are gloomy, indeed; and will suggest to those who never saw the author, what is really true, that, in preaching, he always had a frown on his countenance. He seldom seeks to draw with the cords of love, or with the bands of a man: his motto should be, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." Both methods are good in their season; but the former is, if I mistake not, most consonant to the practice of our Saviour and his apostles, as well as to that of the English divines, who, I think, are the best of all modern preachers.

This puts me in mind of a passage in my friend the bishop of Chester's last letter, which, I know, you will be glad to see: "I am glad to find," says he, "we are to have another volume of sermons from Dr. Blair. For although they may be thought by some severe judges a little too florid and rhetorical, yet they certainly abound with good sense and useful observations, and just sentiments of religion, conveyed in lively and elegant language: better calculated, perhaps, to engage the attention, and touch the hearts of the generality of readers, than that correct simplicity, and chastity of diction, which nicer ears require. There is, however, another volume of sermons expected, with which every class of readers will, I conceive, be abundantly satisfied; I mean one from bishop Hurd. When such talents, and taste, and learning, as his, are applied to the illustration of practical subjects, and the recommendation of common-religious duties, we may expect every effect from them that human abilities are capable of producing. Such publications as these will, I hope, in some degree, counteract the principles that will probably be diffused over the kingdom by a very different sort of composition—a second volume of 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'"

I am much obliged to you, my dear sir, for your kind concern in my welfare, and for the many good advices contained in your last. I am deeply sensible of their importance, and will do what I can to follow them: but in my case there are some peculiar difficulties, which I do not well know how it will be possible for me to get over.

XCIX. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 23d May, 1780.

To say that my departure from Gordon-Castle cost me some sighs and tears, is not saying much ; as I am apt, of late, when alone, to be rather expensive in that way. I left you with a weight upon my mind, which would have been hardly supportable, if it had not been alleviated, in some degree, by the hope of soon meeting the duke at Glasgow, and of seeing your grace once more before the end of summer. By the bye, I hope Mr. Nicols will not intermeddle in the arrangement of the dressing-room library ; I flatter myself, that honour will be reserved for me.

I have sent a small print, which my bookseller, in the abundance of his wisdom, and contrary to my advice, is determined to prefix to a new edition of my "Essays on Poetry, Music, &c." The figure, designed by Angelica, is certainly very noble, —much more so than I expected ; and is intended to represent Socrates in prison, and under sentence of death, composing a hymn in honour of Apollo. But I am afraid, that the readers will neither guess at the meaning, nor see any connection between it and the book : in which case, they will no doubt suppose that the author has prefixed his own image. However, the outline is good and graceful, and the attitude expressive. If it were not rather too melancholy, I would say that it is very like Socrates. Your grace knows, that the old philosopher was one of the merriest men of his time.

perfectly sensible of your
culiarities of my case. I
every day, how solicitous
view from every thing the
painful thoughts. My g
(which are two very pleasi
were not wholly inadequat
are visible to every body.
been complimented on my
I have felt but little of
sight of home used forme
fact, home is not good for
leave it as soon as ever I c

C. TO THE RE

The manuscript sermon of bishop Butler I sent to the bishop of Chester. You will like to see what he says of it. "It abounds with that strong sense and sound reasoning which so eminently distinguished him ; and I cannot see in it the smallest foundation for that accusation which it brought upon him, of being favourable to popery." This, it seems, was the case at the time the sermon was preached ; and it was, perhaps, for this reason that he never published it in his works.

I send you enclosed a small piece of music, which I think you will like. I got the air at Gordon-Castle, and I set to it the second part and bass. If it were sung with three voices, it would, I should imagine, have a very good effect.

I lately heard two anecdotes, which deserve to be put in writing, and which you will be glad to hear. When Handel's "Messiah" was first performed, the audience was exceedingly struck and affected by the music in general ; but when that chorus struck up, "For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," they were so transported, that they all, together with the king, (who happened to be present,) started up, and remained standing till the chorus ended : and hence it became the fashion in England for the audience to stand while that part of the music is performing. Some days after the first exhibition of the same divine oratorio, Mr. Handel came to pay his respects to lord Kinnoull, with whom he was particularly acquainted. His lordship, as was natural, paid him some compliments on the noble entertainment which he had lately given the town. "My lord," said Handel, "*I should be sorry if I only entertained them,*"

wish to make them better." These two anecdotes had from lord Kinroull himself. You will agree with me, that the first does great honour to Handel, to music, and to the English nation: the second tends to confirm my theory, and sir John Hawkins's testimony, that Handel, in spite of what has been said to the contrary, must have been a pious man.

CI. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 2d June, 1788

I HAD the honour to write to your grace on my return to Aberdeen, and to send a parcel of "Mirrors." This will accompany the two last papers that we are to have under that title.

I sympathise with you in your present solitude for, though nobody knows so well as your grace how to improve retirement, yet I do not think it good for any of us to be quite alone. If you go to the Glen,* I would earnestly recommend it to your grace, to leave it to the moon and stars to adorn the night, and to be satisfied with sleeping under a canopy somewhat less sublime than that of heaven. For though, in the Eden of Gordon-Castle there is no serpent, I will not answer for the little paradise of Glenfiddich; and though walks at midnight, and slumbers in the open air, might be had last summer without harm, we have no reason to expect that the present season will be equally indulgent. I grant, that a lonely walk by moonlight is pleasing like other intoxications; but, like them too, it

* Glenfiddich.

hurtful to the nerves ; and I know not, whether the cold bath in the morning be a sufficient antidote. I need not inform your grace, and I hope you will never forget, that in the evening it is particularly dangerous to walk among trees, on account of the damps. It was this that brought all his rheumatisms upon major Mercer, though he was then in one of the best and driest climates in the world—the south of France.

The duke's summons was unexpectedly sudden : I hope his return will be equally so. He was so good, in passing through this town, as to call on me, notwithstanding his hurry, and to desire me to go with him to Edinburgh ; an invitation so very agreeable, that nothing would have hindered me from accepting it but my son's bad health. The boy was at that time very ill ; and I apprehended a consumption : but he is now much better ; Dr. Livingston having ordered for him a preparation of bark and the vitriolic acid, which, with a strict regimen in the article of diet, has, in a few days, had the happiest effects : so that, if nothing unexpected occur, I have thoughts of going southward next week : in which case, it will not be long before your grace hear of me from Glasgow. You will probably hear from me too, if I meet with any adventure. I shall remember the commission in regard to Addison ; and, if you will honour me with any other, please to direct to me at sir William Forbes's, St. Andrew's-street, Edinburgh.

I had lately a *tête-à-tête* of several hours with lord Kaimes and Mrs. Drummond. There was no company ; and we had much conversation on a great variety of subjects—your grace and the duke,

lord and lady F., Mrs. Montagu, David Hume, religion, episcopacy and presbyterianism, manufactures, music, Scotch tunes, with the method of playing them, &c.; and I flatter myself, that his lordship and I parted with some reluctance on both sides. He assured me, that he hated Mr. Hume's tenets as much as I did, or could do; and he spoke of religion with great reverence. In a word, I found from his conversation, that he is just what your grace had described him to me, and that all the other accounts I had heard of him were wide of the truth. I would thank you, madam, for undeceiving me in this particular, and establishing peace, and I hope amity, between us; but I have so many things to thank you for, that, if I were to enter upon that matter in detail, I should not know where to begin, and my letter would never have an end.

Thus far I had written on Friday, when I had the honour to receive your grace's letter of last Wednesday; which is so very flattering to me, that I cannot answer a word. I certainly left Gordon-Castle with great reluctance; and my heart and my fancy did, both of them, and still do, cast

Many a longing, lingering look behind.

The society was most agreeable; but, I flatter myself, you will do me the justice to believe it was not the parting with the *guests* that touched me so nearly,—though, I am sure, I love and esteem them all as much as they themselves would wish me to do.

I delivered your message to Dr. Livingston, with

whom I dined the other day, in company with three sensible and cheerful Quakers. I spoke to them of my friend, and their brother, Mr. Scott, (the author of the "Eclogues," which your grace liked so much,) whom the Londoner very well knew; and I diverted them with the history of a dinner, with which I was once entertained by ten or twelve of their fraternity, on the king's birth-day, at one o'clock, near the confluence of the Thames and Fleet-ditch, the very spot where Pope makes his dunces jump into the mud, in the second book of the "Dunciad." These Quakers were all men of learning and sense; and their manners, polite though peculiar, were to me a very entertaining novelty. Indeed, the affection they showed me, deserved, on my part, the warmest returns of gratitude.

I have put up in a parcel for your grace, "Count Fathom," "The Tale of a Tub," and "Gaudentio di Lucca;" which, with the Italian "Prayer Book," I have committed to a faithful hand. "Gaudentio" (if you have never seen it) will amuse you, though there are tedious passages in it. The whole description of passing the deserts of Africa is particularly excellent. The author is no less a person than the famous bishop Berkeley. As to the whisky, I cannot trust it in the rude hands of a carrier, and must, therefore, keep it till a more favourable opportunity offer: but, that it may remain sacred, I have sealed the cork of the bottle with the impression of three ladies,* whom I take to be your grace's near relations, as they have the honour, not

* The seal had an impression of the three Graces.

only to bear one of your titles, but also to resemble you exceedingly in form, feature, and manner. If you had lived three thousand years ago, which I am very glad you did not, there would have been four of them, and you the first. May all happiness ever attend your grace.

CII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 6th November, 1780.

YOUR letter, my dear sir, from Oxford, which I received a few days ago, gave me great pleasure, on account of the agreeable information it brought me of lady Forbes's health and yours, and of your amusing journey. I know, from Pennant's "Wels Tour," that there are many things in that country worthy of the traveller's attention; many wild and many soothing scenes, and many noble monuments of war, and of superstitious and feudal magnificence. Such things, to a mind turned like yours, would have a charm inexpressible; and would be highly amusing to lady Forbes, whose mind is, if I mistake not, as open to the impressions of romantic art and nature, as either yours or mine; which, I will venture to say, is a bold word. Accept of my hearty welcome to your own house and home, which I hope you have reached before this time; for, in this season of tempest and immature winter, I should be sorry to think that you and your amiable associate were struggling with the inconvenience of deep roads, cold inns, and short days. I hope you got William settled to your mind during your absence; and that, at your return, you found him and my friend Miss Forbes, and my sworn brother

John, and my acquaintance James, and the other young gentleman, who, I hope, will one day be my acquaintance, in perfect health, and as flourishing as I wish them to be.

The many kind attentions I received from my friends in Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, particularly from lady Forbes and you, and Mr. Arbuthnot, did me the greatest service; and I returned home a new man. But then I instantly found myself plunged into such a chaos of perplexity, as at once swallowed up all the little health I had been collecting from so many quarters; and, after a few days' ineffectual wrangling, I was necessitated (I will not say to go, but) to run away to Peterhead, taking my son along with me; and there I remained seven weeks. To unfold the causes of this perplexity, would, I think, require two volumes as large as the "*Sorrows of Werter*:"* I will not, therefore, attempt it at present. I shall only say, that it did not arise from a certain circumstance which lies nearest my heart, (for in that there is not the least variation,) but from the unreasonableness of some persons with whom I am connected, and who, having not much sensibility themselves, can hardly make allowance for that of other people. However, matters are now a little softened, and seem to promise tranquillity, at least, for a short time; and a very small abatement of trouble is a sort of tranquillity to one, who, like me, has been so long buffeted, on all sides, by more storms than are commonly found to assail a person so insignificant as I am. Dr. Livingston knows

* A German novel much in fashion at that time.

every circumstance of what I allude to.* I have in every thing been governed by his advice; for I begin to distrust my own faculties, as I feel them sensibly impaired. At any rate, I am sure I will do well in doing what he recommended; as I have always found him a most intelligent, prudent, and affectionate friend, as well as one of the ablest of his profession. I shall sometime, hereafter, explain myself to you on this subject very particularly. At present, I wish rather to decline troubling you in regard to it.

I am glad you met with the bishop of Bangor. I knew him formerly when he was dean of Canterbury;† and I once passed a morning in company with his lady Mrs. Moore, at Dr. Markham's, then bishop of Chester, now archbishop of York. Your account of Dr. Moore is very just; he is really a most worthy man. By the bye, I think the English bench of bishops was never more respectable than at present for learning and piety.

CIII. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Whitehall, 16th May, 1781.

I HAVE seen most of the fashionable curiosities; but will not trouble your grace with any particular account of them. The exhibition of pictures at the Royal Academy is the best of the kind I have seen. The best pieces, in my opinion, are, *Thais* with a torch in her hand; the *Death of Dido*; and a *Boy*,

* Dr. Thomas Livingston, a physician at Aberdeen.

† Dr. Moore, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury.

supposed to be listening to a wonderful story; these three by sir Joshua Reynolds: a Shepherd-boy, by Gainsborough: some landscapes by Barrett. Christ healing the sick, by West, is a prodigious great work, and has in it great variety of expression; but there is a glare and a hardness in the colouring, which makes it look more like a picture than like nature. Gainsborough's picture of the king is the strongest likeness I have ever seen; his queen too is very well: but he has not given them attitudes becoming their rank; the king has his hat in his hand, and the queen looks as if she were going to curtsy in the beginning of a minuet. Others may think differently: I give my own opinion.

There is nothing at either playhouse that is in the least captivating; nor, I think, one player, Mrs. Abington excepted, whom one would wish to see a second time. I was shocked at Leoni, in

Had I a heart for falsehood framed, &c.

A man singing with a woman's voice sounds as unnatural to me as a woman singing with a man's. Either may do in a private company, where it is enough if people are diverted; but, on a stage, where nature ought to be imitated, both are, in my opinion, intolerable.

Johnson's new "Lives" are published. He is, as your grace heard he would be, very severe on my poor friend, Gray. His life of Pope is excellent; and in all his lives there is merit, as they contain a great variety of sound criticism and pleasing information. He has not done justice to lord Lyttelton.

He has found means to pay me a very great compliment, for which I am much obliged to him; in speaking of Mr. Gray's journey into Scotland in 1765.

Copley's picture of lord Chatham's death is an exhibition of itself. It is a vast collection of portraits, some of them very like; but, excepting three or four of the personages present, few of this vast assembly seem to be much affected with the great event; which divests the picture of its unity, and will in the next age make it cease to be interesting.

CIV. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Middle Scotland-yard, Whitehall, 1st June, 1781.

If you will not allow eating and drinking, and walking and visiting, to be work, I must confess I have for these five weeks been very idle. Yet in such a perpetual hurry have I been kept by this sort of idleness, that I had no time to write, to read, or even to think. For the amusement of my young fellow-traveller,* and in order also to drive away painful ideas from myself, I have run through a complete *Encyclopedie* of shows, and monsters, and other curiosities, from "Douglas" at Drury-Lane, to the puppet-show at Astley's riding-school; from the wonderful heifer with two heads, to Dr. Graham and his celestial brilliancy; from the great lion in the Tower, and the stuffed elephant's skin at sir Ashton Lever's, to the little Welsh wo-

* His son.

man in Holborn, who, though twenty-three years of age, weighs only eighteen pounds.

But, what you will readily believe to have been much more beneficial to my health and spirits, I have been visiting all my friends again and again, and found them as affectionate and attentive as ever. Death has, indeed, deprived me of some since I was last here; of Garrick, and Armstrong, and poor Harry Smith; but I have still many left; some of whom are higher in the world, and in better health, than they were in 1775, and all as well and as flourishing as I had any reason to expect.

I have seen Mr. Langton several times, and I gave him your memorandum relating to M. Trembley.* He goes to Chatham in a few days with his family, in quality of engineer; and I intend to make him a visit there, having some curiosity to see the shipping and the fortifications. You certainly know that Mr. Langton is an officer of militia. He loves the military life, and has been indefatigable in acquiring the knowledge that is necessary to it. He is allowed to be a most excellent engineer. Indeed, he is excellent in every thing.

Johnson grows in grace as he grows in years. He not only has better health and a fresher complexion than ever he had before, (at least since I knew him,) but he has contracted a gentleness of manners which pleases every body. Some ascribe this to the good company to which he has of late been more accustomed than in the early part of his

* Bennet Langton, esq. of Langton, in the county of Lincoln.

life. There may be something in this ; but I am apt to think the good health he has enjoyed for a long time is the chief cause. Mr. Thrale appointed him one of his executors, and left him two hundred pounds : every body says he should have left him two hundred a-year ; which, from a fortune like his, would have been a very inconsiderable deduction.

CV. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

London, 3d June, 1781.

YOUR grace's letter gave me more pleasure than words can express. I see from it, you are in good health and spirits, and that you do me the honour sometimes to think of me. I meet with the greatest civilities here every day, from persons for whom I have the highest esteem ; yet so far am I from entertaining any idea of remaining among them, that I begin to look forward with some impatience to that day on which I am again to set my face northwards, and which, I think, is not above three weeks distant : and I hope, that, in three or four weeks more, I shall have the honour to present you with as many pens at Peterhead, as will convey to all your friends the most pleasing intelligence.

The thunder is roaring while I write this ; and a most welcome sound it is to me, as it will bring rain and coolness, of which the country stands, and I stand, very much in need. For some days past the heat has been intolerable ; the mercury in the thermometer being at 80°, or, as some say, 83°, which is five degrees higher, at least, than ever I knew it in Scotland. Persons who have been in the

West Indies say, that the Jamaica heat is much more tolerable. In this situation, it is no wonder that I should often think of the shades of the holly-bank at Gordon-castle, and the sea breezes of Peterhead.

The Persees, or Gentoos, or (as some call them) the Persian ambassadors, are, at present, one of the great curiosities of the town. They are charged with some embassy from their own country; but what that is nobody knows. Lord William Gordon did me the honour to make me one of a large party, whom he lately invited to Green-park Lodge to see them. By means of a gentleman, who acted as their interpreter, I asked them several questions, to which they returned pertinent answers. They are dressed in the manner of their country, in long robes of a whiteish-coloured stuff resembling Indian silk, with turbans on their heads, differing, however, from the Turkish turbans. Their complexion is a yellowish black, resembling the mulatto colour, with mustachlos or whiskers of the deepest black, as are also their eyes. Their features are regular, and of the European cast: the younger of the two may be called handsome; and the elder, who is his father, has a most expressive, sensible countenance. Though many people of great rank were present, particularly the duke of Gloucester, lord and lady Pembroke, lady Frances Scot, lady Irvine and all her daughters, the three lady Waldegraves, lord Herbert, &c. the strangers behaved with great ease, as well as with great courtesy. Lord William presented me to the duke of Gloucester, with whom I had the honour of a short conversation, and who

made me very happy in saying that he had heard your grace speak of me.

CVI. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

London, 28th June, 1781.

I HAVE seen bishop Hurd once and again; and last Sunday at Canewood passed a truly classical day with lord Mansfield and him. I never saw lord Mansfield better. He is in perfect health and good spirits, and looks no older than fifty-five. I walked with me three miles and a half, without the least appearance of fatigue.

The bishop of Chester has been gone some time and several others of my friends have left the town so that as my business is finished, or nearly so, I have nothing to keep me longer here. I hope I shall meet in little more than a fortnight.

Mrs. Montagu, on going to her country-seat in Berkshire about a month ago, was seized with violent illness. The physicians sent her instantly to Bath, where she has been ever since. I had the pleasure to learn last night, by a letter from her own hand, that she is now quite well.

I went lately to Rochester, on a visit to Mr. Langton and lady Rothes, who desire to be remembered to lady Forbes and you. Mr. Langton has sent me Trembley's book, which I shall take proper care of. At Chatham I saw that wonderful sight, a ninety-gun ship on the stocks: but, from the top of Shooters-hill, on my return, I saw a sight still more magnificent, a complete view of this huge metropolis from Chelsea to Blackwall.

the back-ground embellished with a violent storm of thunder and lightning, which roared and flashed without intermission.

I thought it my duty to appear at the levee before I left London ; and accordingly the week before last I went to court. The king had not seen me for six years, and yet, to my surprise, knew me at first sight. He spoke to me with his wonted condescension and affability ; and paid me a very polite compliment on the subject of my writings.

CVII. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 21st November, 1781.

IN calling your grace's attention to an "Essay on Beauty," I am afraid I shall incur the same censure with a brother-professor of mine, who had the assurance to deliver, in the hearing of the greatest commander on earth, a dissertation on the art of war. "Many a fool have I seen in my time," said Hannibal, "but this old blockhead exceeds them all."

However, one must keep one's word ; and, as your grace desired to see this Essay, and I promised to send it, (as soon as I could get it transcribed,) I send it accordingly. I should not give you the trouble to return it, if I had not promised a reading of it to sir Joshua Reynolds. As it is only an extract from "A Discourse on Memory and Imagination," (which your grace could not find time to look into at Peterhead, and which it is impossible for me to send at present, as I am correcting it for the press,) I am afraid you will

find some obscurity in it, especially towards the beginning.

If the last letter had not miscarried, which I had the honour to write to your grace, you would have known that I am now very busy in revising and transcribing papers; as I am to put a quarto volume to press in little more than a month; and a quarto not much smaller than my last. Your grace has seen a good deal of it, but not the whole.

CVIII. TO THE REV. MR. WILLIAMSON.

Aberdeen, 5th December, 1781.

IF Dr. Horne* be returned to Oxford, I beg you will take the first opportunity to present my best respects to him, and assure him, that I shall ever retain a most grateful sense of the honour he has done me in his elegant letter to Adam Smith.† This acknowledgment comes rather late; but it is not on that account the less sincere. Why it has been so long delayed, I now beg leave to explain.

The first notice I received of Dr. Horne's excellent pamphlet, was in a short letter from you, which came at a time when my health was in so bad a way, that most of my friends here thought I had not many weeks to live. These sufferings, I must acknowledge, drove all literary matters out of

* Afterwards bishop of Norwich.

† On the Life, Death, and Philosophy of David Hume, esq. This pamphlet has lately been republished by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and at a very low price, for the purpose of general distribution.

my head: your letter was lost; and of Dr. Horne's pamphlet I heard nothing more, till this last summer, when lord Mansfield asked me whether I had seen it, speaking of it, at the same time, in terms of the highest approbation. I was forced to confess I had not seen it, and never heard of it but once; and, to account for this, I told his lordship what I have now told you. At Oxford, you will probably remember, that I found it in the beginning of July last; and then it was that I knew for the first time the extent of my obligations to Dr. Horne. I wished immediately, as you know, to pay my respects to him, but he was gone out of town. Since my return from England, I find the pamphlet has given universal satisfaction; and some of my friends have wished, that a small and cheap edition of it could be printed, and circulated all over the country, as they think it might counterwork the unwearied efforts which Mr. Hume's friends have long been making to extol his character, and depress mine.

CIX. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 18th August, 1782.

I HAD the honour to receive your grace's letter, and the noble present enclosed in it,* just as I was setting out for Edinburgh. After many attempts to thank you for it, and to tell you how much I glory in it, I find I must at last confine my gratitude and my exultations to my own breast; having

* A portrait of the duchess of Gordon.

no words that can in any degree do them justice. It is indeed a most charming picture, and an exact copy of sir Joshua's; and I am envied the possession of it by every one who sees it. Mr. Smith has outdone himself on the occasion; I am exceedingly obliged to him.

Your grace will perhaps remember, that at Gordon-castle there was some conversation about Petrarch. Knowing that it was the custom of his age to write gallant verses; and conjecturing, from other circumstances, that his passion for Laura was not so serious a business as his French biographer pretends, I happened to say, that there was some reason to think that he wrote his Italian sonnets as much to display his wit as to declare his passion. I have since made some discoveries in regard to this matter, which amount to what follows:

That Petrarch's passion for the lady was so far sincere, as to give him uneasiness, appears from an account of his life and character, written by himself in Latin prose, and prefixed to a folio edition of his works, of which I have a copy, printed in the year 1554. But that his love was of the permanent and overwhelming nature, which some writers suppose, or that it continued to the end of his life, (as a late writer affirms,) there is good reason to doubt, upon the same authority. Nay, there is presumptive, and even positive evidence to the contrary; and that he was less subject, than most men can pretend to be, to the tyranny of the "Winged Boy."

The presumptive evidence is founded on the ver

laborious life which he must have led in the pursuits of literature. His youth was employed in study, at a time when study was extremely difficult, on account of the scarcity of books and of teachers. He became the most learned man of his time; and to his labour in transcribing several ancient authors with his own hand, we are indebted for their preservation. His works, in my edition of them, fill 1455 folio pages, closely printed; of which the Italian Sonnets are not more than a twentieth part: the rest being Latin Essays, Dialogues, &c. and an epic poem in Latin verse, called "Africa," as long as "Paradise Lost." His retirement at Vaucluse, (which in Latin he calls Clausa,) was by no means devoted to love and Laura. "There," says he, in the account of his life above mentioned, "almost all the works I ever published were completed, or begun, or planned; and they were so many," these are his words, "that even to these years they employ and fatigue me." In a word, Petrarch wrote more than I could transcribe in twenty years; and more than I think he could have composed, though he had studied without intermission; in forty. Can it be believed, that a man of extreme sensibility, pining, from twenty-five to the end of his life, in hopeless love, could be so zealous a student, and so voluminous a writer?

But more direct evidence we have from himself, in his own account above mentioned of his life, conversation, and character. I must not translate the passage literally, on account of an indelicate word or two; but I shall give the sense of it: "In my youth I was violently in love; but it was only

once; and the passion was honourable, or virtuous; and would have continued longer, if the flame, *already decaying*, had not *been extinguished* by a death, which was bitter indeed, but useful." And a little after, he says: "*Before I was forty years of age*, I had banished from my mind every idea of love as effectually as if I had never seen a woman." He adds some things, in a strain of bitterness, execrating the *belle passion*, as what he had always hated as a vile and a disgraceful servitude.

In the above passage, your grace will observe, that Petrarch does not name his mistress. This, if we consider the manners of that age, and the piety and good sense of Petrarch, may make us doubt whether Laura was really the object of his passion. I had this doubt for a little while: but Hieronymo Squarzacchi, a writer of that age, and the author of another Latin Life of Petrarch, prefixed to the same edition of his works, positively says, that the name of the lady whom the poet loved was Lauretta, which her admirer changed to Laura. The name, thus changed, supplies him with numberless allusions to the laurel, and to the story of Apollo and Daphne. Might not Petrarch, in many of his sonnets, have had an allegorical reference to *the poetical laurel*, which was offered him at one and the same time by deputies from France and from Italy; and with which, to his great satisfaction, he was actually crowned at Rome with the customary solemnities? In this view, his love of fame and of poetry would happily coincide with his tenderness for Laura, and give peculiar enthusiasm to such of his thoughts as might relate to any one of the three passions.

But how, you will say, is all this to be reconciled to the account given by the French author of that Life of Petrarch, which Mrs. Dobson has abridged in English?

I answer: first, That Petrarch's own account of his life, in serious prose, is not to be called in question: and, secondly, That to a French biographer, in a matter of this kind, no degree of credit is due. I have seen pretended lives, in French, of Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, &c. in which there was hardly one word of truth; the greatest part being fable, and that sort of declamation which some people call *sentiment*: and your grace knows, that no other character belongs to the "Belisarius" and "Incas of Peru" by Marmontel. The French Life of Petrarch I consider in the same light; and that what is said of his *manuscript* letters and memoirs, is no better than a job contrived by the bookseller, and executed by the author.

CX. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 25th October, 1782.

ELPHINSTON'S "Martial" is just come to hand. It is truly an *unique*. The specimens formerly published did very well to laugh at; but a whole quarto of nonsense and gibberish is too much. It is strange that a man, not wholly illiterate, should have lived so long in England, without learning the language.

I have lately been very much entertained and instructed with a work of a different nature, which will do honour to this country, and be a blessing to mankind—Dr. Campbell's "Translation of the

Four Gospels," with explanatory and critical annotations. I have revised the first eighteen chapters of Matthew; and am really astonished at the learning and accuracy of the author. He had before given the world sufficient proofs of both; but this will be his greatest work. It will be accompanied with preliminary dissertations, for explaining what could not be conveniently illustrated in the notes. I have read the titles of the Dissertations, and shall soon have them in my hands. The whole will make, as I guess, two quarto volumes. I have several times studied the Gospels in the original; but had no idea, till now, that the common translation stood so much in need of a revisal.

CXI. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 30th January, 1783.

I LATELY had the happiness to receive from the bishop of Chester the most agreeable accounts of your health; which no perplexities of my own can ever make me cease, even for a single hour, to be interested in.

Your little godson, who was all last summer in the country, returned home in October, and since that time has been under my own inspection; which, till now, the peculiar circumstances of my family did not permit him to be. I found him wild, and not very tractable; though not destitute either of affection or of generosity. He had been committed to the care of people, who, it seems, thought it too soon to inure him to moral discipline. But as that part of education cannot, in my opinion, begin too early, I have been combating his evil

habits with all the caution and steadiness I am master of; and my success has been not inconsiderable. I have taught him to fear my anger above every thing, (for he is too young to be impressed with any fear of a higher kind;) and I find, that the more he fears, the more he loves me. His brother co-operates with me in this good work; and I hope we shall in time make him a very good boy. He is stout and healthy, and the picture of good humour and good cheer, and a very great favourite in the neighbourhood. Bodily correction I have never used as yet; considering it as a dangerous remedy, which ought not to be had recourse to till all others have been tried and found ineffectual. My other boy is busy at his French and Greek. I thought him too young to go into the higher classes, and have made him study the elements of Greek a second time. He is not, I think, very lucky in a French master. The man speaks the language well enough, but does not seem to be an exact grammarian: however, my boy knows grammar pretty well, and has always been accustomed to study with accuracy; so that I hope he is in no danger of getting into habits of superficial reading.

We have been here, and still are, in great apprehensions of famine. Last summer was cold and tempestuous beyond imagination; and in many parts of the country there was little or no harvest. Oatmeal, without which our common people have no notion of supporting life, sells just now at double its usual price; and the common people are murmuring; and anonymous letters, in a threatening style, have been sent to many persons. In no other

cessation of hostilities is a
The news is certainly very
tions be but moderately go
ration from America will
either to this country or to
ful ; but such a separatio
soon, and I wish it had
sooner. Though our emp
tent, our national honour is
enemies, notwithstanding
and we have lost, have no c

My new book has been
time ; and I have now rece
it, which is about one-fifth
quarto, of the same size nea
what I have seen is very c
proprietor, Mr. Strahan, th
publishers.

allowed to imitate what we cannot hope to equal; nay, I think we are, in every laudable pursuit, commanded by all the great teachers of mankind to do so.

The literary labours of lord Kaimes have come to an end at last. He was certainly an extraordinary man: and, though he cannot be vindicated in every thing, his enemies must allow, that his mind was uncommonly active, and his industry indefatigable. He was six-and-fifty years an author; for to a Collection of Decisions, dated in 1726, I have seen a preface of his writing. He retained his good humour to the last. He and I misunderstood one another for several years; but we were thoroughly reconciled long before his death, and he acknowledged that he had utterly mistaken my character.

I am very happy to find, that my notions, in regard to the origin of language, coincide so exactly with yours. I have, I think, confuted Monboddo's theory, which I look upon as equally absurd and dangerous. He and lord Kaimes passed a few days last autumn together at Gordon-castle, and gave no little entertainment to the company; for they two were in every thing direct opposites; and they mutually despised and detested each other. Kaimes confessed that he understood no Greek; and Monboddo told him, that no man who was ignorant of Greek could pretend to write a page of good English. Monboddo has many good qualities: but on the subject of Greek and of Aristotle, he is as absurd and as pedantic as Don Quixote was on that of chivalry. The last time I saw him, I incensed him to the highest degree, by calling the great circum-

of being a good seamen, even as one may be a
pert shoemaker or tailor, and who, beside
an obscure origin: for I hold," said he,
men, as well as in horses, nothing can be
what is *noble*." It was, indeed, in opposition
to this notable aphorism, that I had mentioned
the name of Cook with that encomium which
the wrath of Monboddo.

CXII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES

Aberdeen, 2d March

I HAVE been more idle, and more in company
this winter than I used to be; which the doctors
say is good for my health. But I have been
quite idle. I have revised, with all the
I am master of, Dr. Campbell's new translation
of Matthew and Mark, with the notes upon
ten or twelve of his preliminary dissertations.

and after marriage as blind as possible, to one another's faults, so I consider it as my duty to be as captious as possible in the revisal of a friend's work before publication, and when it is published to be captious no longer. The principal, however, is pleased to think more favourably than I do of my strictures, and tells me he has adopted nine-tenths of them. Of the translation of Luke and John, and the notes upon it, and of four or five more preliminary dissertations, he has the materials almost ready; but they are not yet put together. The whole will amount to two large quartos at least; and will, in my opinion, be one of the most important publications that has appeared in our time. It is really a treasure of theological learning, exact criticism, and sound divinity; and has given me more information, in regard to what may be called scriptural knowledge, than all the other books I ever read. His translation conveys the meaning of the original very correctly, and, so far as I could observe, neither adds nor takes away a single idea; but I have told him, that I wish it had been more strictly literal, and more conformable to the Greek (or rather to the Hebrew) idiom, which is in many things congenial to the English. His love of conciseness makes him sometimes less simple, though perhaps not less expressive, than the original, and sometimes less harmonious than the common version. But I believe most of the passages of this sort, that I objected to, will be mended.

CXIII. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 16th March, 1783.

I DO not wonder that your grace should be greatly affected with lord Kaimes's kind remembrance in the hour of death. Friendship, that can stand such a test, must be very sincere indeed. But you have other friends, who are capable of all this, though perhaps it may not be in their power to show it. Recollection and composure are not granted to all in those awful moments. On his own account, his death is not to be regretted; but Mrs. Drummond* is much to be pitied. No man ever enjoyed life more than he; and, when we consider how little time he passed in sleep, we cannot suppose his age to be less than one hundred and twenty. All his wishes, with respect to this world, were gratified; and there is no reason to think that his life could have been prolonged without a prolongation of pain. I hope he employed a good hand to draw the picture. A good portrait of a dear friend is inestimable; but an indifferent one is a daily and an hourly grievance. As I wish to die satisfied with every body, it gives me great pleasure to think, that, before his death, he became satisfied with me: this, and many other good things, I owe to your grace.

I need not attempt to express what I feel, in consequence of that kind invitation which your

* The wife of lord Kaimes, who assumed the name of Drummond, on succeeding to her family estate, on the death of her nephew.

grace and the duke have honoured me with. I have been long accustomed to his grace's goodness and yours in this particular ; but I trust my gratitude is as lively as it was at the first. If my health would permit, and if I could get my family properly settled, nothing would hinder me from setting out for Gordon-castle the first or second week of April.

CXIV. TO THE HONOURABLE MR. BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 30th March, 1783.

I REALLY do not know what to say, or what to think, of the times. They seem to exhibit scenes of confusion, which are too extensive for my poor head either to arrange or to comprehend. We had much need of peace ; but I know not whether we have reason to rejoice in the peace we have made. Yet lord Shelburne spoke plausibly for it ; but lord Loughborough was as plausible on the other side. When a controversy turns upon a fact, in regard to which the two contending parties are likely never to agree, a decision is not to be expected ; and people may continue to wrangle, and to make speeches, till death ; like the president of the Robin-Hood, knock them down with his hammer, without coming one inch nearer the truth than they were at first. This seems to be the present case. If we were as much exhausted, and our enemies as powerful, as one party affirms, we had nothing for it but to surrender at discretion, and any peace was good enough for us : but if we were as little exhausted, and our enemies as little powerful, as the

other party says, we might have made a struggle or two more before we called out for mercy.

To the present confusion in our councils I can foresee no end, till the rage of party subside, or till the executive power regain some part of that influence, which it has been gradually losing ever since I was capable of attending to public affairs. The encroachments that have lately been made on the power of the crown are so great as to threaten, in my opinion, the subversion of the monarchy. Our government is too democratical; and what we want, in order to secure its permanence, is not more liberty, for we have too much; but the operation of a despotical principle, to take place in cases of great public danger. If it had not been for this, the consular state of Rome would not have existed two hundred years. I hate despotism, and love liberty, as much as any man; but because medicine has sometimes killed as well as cured, I would not for that reason make a vow never to swallow a drug as long as I lived. The despotical principle I speak of, might be a little violent in its operation, like James's powders and laudanum; but if it could allay paroxysms and fevers in the body-politic, (which, by judicious management, it certainly might do,) it would be a valuable addition to the *materia medica* of government.

CXV. TO THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

Peterhead, 18th September, 1783.

YOUR lordship's very kind letter, which I had the honour to receive about six weeks ago, demands

my most grateful acknowledgments. I wished to have made them sooner, but was prevented by a tedious indisposition ; from which, after long perseverance in the use of the sea-bath at this place, I am now recovered so far as to be able to attend a little to the duties of life.

I know not how to thank your lordship for honouring my book with a perusal ; nor have I words to express the pleasure which your approbation of it has afforded me. Some professed critics have been pleased to find much fault with it, and with me ; but your favourable opinion, my lord, is more than a sufficient counterbalance to all they have done or can do ; and satisfies me, that my endeavours to do a little good, and give a little harmless amusement, have not been wholly unsuccessful. Indeed I have the happiness to find, that most of those who approve my principles, are as friendly to this performance as I could desire.

I have not yet met with Dr. Blair's " Lectures," but I hear they have been very well received. With respect to his " Sermons," I am entirely of your opinion. Great merit they undoubtedly have ; but I cannot discover in them that sublime simplicity of manner and style, which I have long thought essential to such compositions, and have seen so nobly exemplified in those of your lordship.

Whether it will be in my power to prepare any more of my papers for the press, I know not ; but I shall keep the thing in view ; and, if Providence grant me a moderate share of health and spirits, shall consider it as my indispensable duty, as far as I am able, to promote the love of truth, and to oppose the licentious doctrines that many authors of

this age are labouring so industriously to establish. Though my last publication does not bear a controversial form, a great part of it was really intended, as your lordship observes, "to correct some mistakes, and obviate some abuses, of other writers."

I would have availed myself, with the greatest pleasure, of your lordship's most obliging invitation to Worcestershire; but I am not yet so well as to undertake a journey, and the business of my profession will soon call me to Aberdeen, and confine me to the college. Next summer I hope I shall be in a condition to revisit England, and pay my respects to your lordship once more.

CXVI. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 2d February, 1784.

MR. DILLY having informed me, that a new edition is wanted of the "Minstrel," and the other little poems subjoined to it, I am now revising and correcting them for the last time. Will you permit me, madam, to inscribe them to you? The inscription shall be short and simple; and, if you please, in the following terms:

To
MRS. MONTAGU,
These little Poems,
Now revised and corrected
For the last time,
Are,
With every Sentiment of
Esteem and Gratitude,
Most respectfully inscribed
By the AUTHOR.

I have another favour to ask, which is, that, as I have mentioned the name of our lamented friend, Dr. Gregory, in the concluding stanza of the second book of the "Minstrel," you will not forbid me to insert yours in the last stanza of the first. I had not the honour to be known to you when I published that first book; and, intending to put the name of a friend in the last stanza, but being then undetermined with respect to the person, I left in one of the lines a blank space, which has been continued in all the editions. That blank, with your permission, shall now be filled up; and then the stanza will run thus:

Here pause, my Gothic lyre, a little while;
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim:
But on this verse if Montagu should smile,
New lays ere long shall animate thy frame:
And her applause to me is more than fame,
For still with truth accords her taste refined.
At lucre or renown let others aim;
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom nature's charms inspire, and love of human kind.

It would give me no little pleasure to see in the same poem the names of Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Gregory; two persons so dear to me, and who had so sincere a friendship for one another. Besides, madam, I beg leave to put you in mind, that the first book of the poem was published at his desire, and the second at yours. So that I have more reasons than one for making this request. When this affair is settled, and the volume revised once more, I bid adieu to poetry for ever. I wish I could say of my voice what Milton said of his: that it is

unchanged

To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen.

But, alas! I am in the condition of Virgil's forlorn shepherd, to whom, indeed, it better becomes me to compare myself:

*Omnia fert ætas, animum quoque. Sæpe ego longos
Cantando puerum memini me condere soles.
Nunc oblita mihi tot carmina: vox quoque Mœrim
Jam fugit ipsa.*

By the bye, I have a good mind to make this a motto to my little poetical volume.

CXVII. TO MISS VALENTINE.*

Edinburgh, 28th May, 1784.

MANY interesting matters have happened since I have been here; and if I had time, I could write a wondrous long letter of news. The election of Scotch peers, the meeting of parliament, the state of parties, the old and the new ministry, Pitt and Fox, the general assembly—all these things are now forgotten; and nothing here is spoken or thought of but Mrs. Siddons. I have seen this wonderful person, not only on the stage, but in private company; for I passed two days with her at the earl of Buchan's. Her powers in tragedy are beyond comparison great. I thought my old friend Garrick fell little or nothing short of theatrical

* A niece of Dr. Beattie, and afterwards wife of Mr. Professor Glennie.

perfection ; and I have seen him in his prime, and in his highest characters : but Garrick never affected me half so much as Mrs. Siddons has done. Indeed the heart that she cannot subdue must be made of other materials than flesh and blood. In the " Caledonian Mercury " you will see, from time to time, some critical observations on her action, which are very well written. The encomiums are high ; but I assure you they are not above her merit. James, too, has seen her, and is transported. He never till now, he says, knew what acting was. It was very difficult to procure places : but by the kind attentions of the duchess of Gordon, and lord and lady Buchan, I was nobly accommodated, and in the very best seats in the house. In private company, Mrs. Siddons is a modest, unassuming, sensible woman ; of the gentlest and most elegant manners. Her moral character is not only unblemished, but exemplary. She is above the middle size, and I suppose about thirty-four years of age. Her countenance is the most interesting that can be ; and, excepting the duchess of Gordon's, the most beautiful I have ever seen. Her eyes and eye-brows are of the deepest black. She loves music, and is fond of the Scotch tunes ; many of which I played to her on the violoncello. One of them (" She rose and let me in," which you know is a favourite of mine) made the tears start from her eyes. " Go on," said she to me, " and you will soon have your revenge ;" meaning, that I would draw as many tears from her as she had drawn from me. She sung " Queen Mary's Complaint " to admiration ; and I had the honour to accompany her on the bass.

Dr. Johnson, Mr. Boswell,
there. Sir Joshua's picture
of the greatest efforts of
with me, that she resemble
tenance. Old Mr. Sheridan
not a little on having been
ing forward that incompara
the other day, that in ever
lady Townly to Nell the
great and as original as in
Davies (the author of "G
he could account for Gar
discouragement of her. H
"How is it possible," said
be jealous of a woman?"
jealous of a child," answ
had been a favourite of th

situation in a manner that did honour to his feelings.

CXIX. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, 14th July, 1784.

I AM now, my dear sir, arrived at a place, where external nature wears a face of the most profound tranquillity; and sit down to thank you for your two last letters, which came to hand the day before I left the town. It is so far fortunate, that Mrs. B's removal to Musselburgh was attended with so little inconvenience. My confidence in your friendship and goodness entirely satisfies me that you will soon put matters on a right footing. I lament, indeed, that your attention to me and mine should give you so much trouble; but the consciousness of doing good to the unfortunate and forlorn will in part reward you; and no mind ever possessed that consciousness in a more exquisite degree than yours has reason to do.

The hot weather made London so disagreeable, that I was obliged to leave it before I had seen all my friends: I must make a longer stay when I return thither. I wish I had time and capacity to give you a description of this parsonage. It is delightfully situated about half-way down a hill fronting the south, about a mile from Coxheath. My windows command a prospect, extending southward about twelve miles, and from east to west not less, I suppose, than forty. In this whole space I do not see a single speck of ground that is not in the highest degree cultivated; for Coxheath is not in sight. The lawns in the neighbourhood, the hop-grounds,

zen at the distance of m
you will have some idea o
The only thing wanting is
water; but we have some
that glitter through the
pleasing effect. With abu
no damp nor fenny ground
try looks at a distance li
the trees do not press up
present see one that I cou
is no road within sight, t
the highways being very h
ther travellers nor carriag
thing in motion; which
peace and quiet, as I thi
of before; and forms a m
the endless noise and res
dill-

santest spots in England. The whole is bounded by a winding gravel-walk, about half a mile in circumference. Close by lives a most agreeable lady, with whom we all breakfasted to-day. She is the widow of sir Roger Twisden; and, though not more than five-and-twenty, lives in this elegant retirement, and employs herself chiefly in the education of her daughter, a fine child of four years of age, who is mistress of her catechism, and reads wonderfully well. I expect soon to see our friend Mr. Langton, as the bishop proposes to send him an invitation, Rochester being only ten miles off. Tunbridge-wells is fifteen miles the other way.

CXX. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, 31st July, 1784.

YOUR last letter having given me the fullest assurance that the unfortunate object of our attention is now in circumstances as comfortable as her condition will admit of, I have been endeavouring to relieve my mind, for a time at least, from that load of anxiety which has so long oppressed it; and I already feel the happy consequences of this endeavour. My health is greatly improved; and, if this rheumatism would let me alone, I might almost say that I am quite well. Certain it is, that I have not been so well any time these four years. The tranquillity and beauty, the peace and the plenty, of this charming country, are a continual feast to my imagination; and I must be insensible, indeed, if the kindness, the cheerfulness, the piety, and the instructive conversation of my excellent friend the bishop of Chester and his amiable lady,

... some one
knew in London; and
ones, on whom I set
ton and lady Rothes
of two days. You will
regret we parted with
is continually improv
every other thing that
and loved him; but I
more than ever. We
you. I have given the
family transactions, pa
mouth. He highly app
been done; bestows g
conduct; and has giv
would expect from his
of the world. I have
parture from this parad

which we pass our time at Hunton, I am sure you would be pleased with it. This is a rainy day, and I have nothing else to do at present: why, then, should I not make the trial?

Our hour of breakfast is ten. Immediately before it, the bishop calls his family together, prays with them, and gives them his blessing: the same thing is constantly done after supper, when we part for the night. In the intervals of breakfast, and in the evening, when there is no company, his lordship sometimes reads to us in some entertaining book. After breakfast, we separate, and amuse ourselves as we think proper, till four, the hour of dinner. At six, when the weather is fair, we either walk, or make a visit to some of the clergy or gentry in the neighbourhood, and return about eight. We then have music, in which I am sorry to say that I am almost the only performer. I have got a violoncello, and play Scotch tunes, and perform Handel's, Jackson's, and other songs, as well as I can; and my audience is very willing to be pleased. The bishop and Mrs. Porteus are both fond of music. These musical parties are often honoured with the company of the accomplished and amiable lady Twisden, of whom I gave you some account in my last. Observe that there are in this part of Kent no fewer than three ladies of that name: but the one I speak of, is lady Twisden of Jennings, in the parish of Hunton; who, in the course of one year, was a maid, a wife, a widow, and a mother; whose husband, sir Roger, died about five years ago; and who, though possessed of beauty and a large fortune, and not more than twenty-five years of age, has ever since lived in this retirement, employing

Dramas,

and in which I observe
favourite passages with a nicety
does great honour to her heart,
judgment. By the bye, Miss Mo
very considerable merit. My co
works was excited by Johnson,
great solemnity, that she was "a
versificatrix" in the English lang

So much for our week-days.
eleven, we repair to church. It
building, with a pretty good ring
congregation are a stout, well-f
ple, clean and neat in their dre
plary in the decorum with whi
several parts of public worshi
the area to the bishop's pew
each side, a profound obeisan
we return. The prayers are
Hill, the curate, and the bis!
not tell you now, because I t

Butter is in

e area of the church. In these lectures he to them, in the simplest and clearest manner with his usual elegance, the fundamental principles of religion and morality; concludes with an address to the more advanced years. This institution of the bishop's I admire. When children see themselves attended to, and so much pains taken in teaching them; they cannot fail to look upon religion as a matter of importance; and, if they do so, it is possible for them, considering the advantage they enjoy, to be ignorant of it. The catechumen examinations in the church of Scotland (such as I have seen) are extremely ill adapted for doing good; being encumbered with metaphysical distinctions, and expressed in a language, which to children are utterly unintelligible, and but little understood even by the sagacious of the common people. The bishop that he chose to deliver this lecture from the pulpit, and without putting on lawn sleeves, that it might make the stronger impression upon the people; having observed, he said, that what is said from the pulpit, and with the usual form, is too apt to be considered, both by the young and the old, as a thing of course. On Sunday he sometimes reads to his servants a plain abstract of the Scripture history, in a similar manner so that which was lately published by Mrs. Trimmer, and formerly by lady New-

other district of Great Britain, that I have there so little the appearance of poverty, and no indications of competence and satisfaction.

tion in the countenance and dress of the common people, as in this part of Kent. In this parish there is only one alehouse, the profits whereof are inconsiderable. The people are fond of cricket-matches at which there is a great concourse of men, women and children, with good store of ale and beer, and gingerbread, &c. One of these was solemnized a few nights ago in a field adjacent to the parish church. It broke up about sun-set, with much merriment, but without drunkenness or riot. The contest was between the men of Hunton and the men of Peckham; and the latter were victorious.

CCXI. TO DR. PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Sandleford, near Newbury, Berks, 18th August, 1791.

It is but a week since I exchanged the paradise of Hunton for the purgatory of London; and it is almost a year: so much, during that short period have I suffered from heat, and bustle, and business, and (what is worst of all) from sorrow of heart, in parting with the best of friends. The month which I passed at Hunton was the happiest of my life, and I dare not flatter myself with the hope of another. But I shall, as long as I live, derive satisfaction from recalling the persons, the conversations, and the scenery of it; which now occupy a large space (if I may so express myself) in my imagination, that there is hardly room for the intrusion of any other idea.

On Saturday and Sunday I was so overpowered by the intolerable heat of the town, that on Monday I was glad to make my escape a second time into the country. I passed the night at Reading,

yesterday at three o'clock arrived here; where I found Mrs. Montagu and her nephew in perfect health, and very anxious in their inquiries after the health of Mrs. Porteus and your lordship. I had not been here five minutes, when the wind on a sudden shifted, with a violent squall, to the north-east, and the weather in an instant changed from very hot to very cold, as it still continues to be.

This place is much improved since I saw it last. A great deal of brick-building and garden-wall is cleared away, and the lawn is opening very fast on every side. A little rivulet, that used to wander, unheard and unseen, through a venerable grove of oaks, is now collected into two large and beautiful pieces of water, round which the walks and grounds are laid out to very great advantage indeed. The situation is on an eminence, with a gentle slope of a quarter of a mile towards the south; and from every part of the lawn there is a beautiful prospect, first of a romantic village, called Newtown, and beyond that of the Hampshire hills, some of which are tufted with wood, and others bare, and green, and smooth to the top.

At a distance of about thirty yards from the house of Sandleford, stood formerly an old chapel, (for the place was once a priory,) which, for a century past, or more, had been neglected, or used as a place for lumber. This Mrs. Montagu has transformed into a very magnificent room, and joined to the main body of the house by a colonnade; which, expanding in the middle, and rising to the height of thirty feet at least, forms a noble drawing-room of an elliptical shape. When the doors of these rooms are thrown open, the walk, from end to end,

is upwards of a hundred feet, and the height and breadth proportionable. The dining-room terminates in a very large window in the Gothic style, reaching from the floor almost to the roof, and looking into a grove of tall oaks, which, with a happy and very peculiar effect, retire from the eye in four rows, and give to this spacious apartment the appearance of a vast arbour. From this account, if I have done any justice to my idea, you will conclude, and justly too, that there is some little resemblance between this room and the new room at Hunton.

CXXII. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 11th October, 1784.

I ARRIVED at Peterhead the first of October. I went instantly to Mrs. Arbuthnot,* whom I found in tolerable health, sitting solitary by her little fire, and amusing herself, as usual, with a book and her work; both of which she has the art of attending to at the same time. She was the more pleased to see me, as my arrival was unexpected; for she had not heard that I was returned to Scotland. After she had asked all the customary questions, I told her, without betraying any emotion, or seeming to have any thing in view but her amusement, that if she was at leisure, I would tell her a story. I accordingly began; and, agreeably to the commission with which you honoured me, made a very long and

* The widow of a captain Andrew Arbuthnot of Peterhead, on whom Mrs. Montagu bestowed a small annuity.

circumstantial story of it, recapitulating, as far as my memory would enable me, every thing that passed in that conversation at Sandlesford, of which she and her aunt, Mrs. Cockburn, were the subject. I saw she was greatly affected with the idea of your thinking so favourably of her aunt, and with your condescension in inquiring so minutely into her own story and character; but I did not throw out a single hint that could lead her to anticipate what was to follow. At last, when I found that her heart was thoroughly warmed, and recollected your observation, that the human heart in that state becomes malleable, I hastened to the conclusion, which I expressed in the simplest and fewest words possible; so that the whole struck her at one and the same instant. She attempted an exclamation, but it was inarticulate, and almost resembled a scream; the tears ran down her furrowed cheeks; and she could only say "O dear, I cannot speak one word!" and seemed almost exhausted with the effort that had produced that short sentence. I desired her not to attempt to speak, but to hear me a little farther; and then told her, madam, that such acts of beneficence were familiar things to you; and mentioned some instances that had come to my knowledge, particularly that of Mrs. Williams. She held up her eyes and hands, sometimes in silent adoration of Providence, and sometimes with the most passionate expressions of gratitude to her noble benefactress. In a word, madam, she accepted your bounty in a way that did honour both to her understanding and to her feelings; and I left her to compose herself by silent meditation. Indeed, I made haste to get away after I had executed

my commission; for the scene was so delightfully affecting, that I could stand it no longer.

When the news was known next day in the town, it diffused a very general joy; and many an honest heart invoked the blessing of Heaven upon your head: for Mrs. Arbuthnot's character is exceedingly respected by all who know her; and her narrow circumstances have long been matter of general regret; as the delicacy of her mind was well known, which no doubt discouraged some persons from making a direct offer of their services, though indirectly, I believe, that some little matters have been done for her benefit. Yet, since her husband's death, which happened four-and-forty years ago, I know not whether she was at any time worth ten pounds a-year. With this small appointment she has constantly maintained the appearance of a gentlewoman, and has received the visits of the best people in the town and neighbourhood, whom she was always happy to entertain with a dish of tea; and among her visitors can reckon the present duchess of Gordon, the countess of Errol, lord Saltoun's family, sir William Forbes, and many others of the best fashion. What is yet more strange, with this small appointment, she has always found means to be charitable to the poor; and when I have seen her dealing out her alms, which was commonly a handful of oatmeal to each person, I know not how often she has put me in mind of the widow in the Gospel.

There are several persons of her name in this town; and, therefore, it may be proper to inform you, that her distinguishing name is Mrs. Andrew Arbuthnot. The name Arbuthnot is frequent in

the neighbourhood. The great Dr. John Arbuthnot, so eminent for his virtue, his learning, and his wit, was the grandson of a gentleman-farmer, who lived at a place called Scots-mill, three miles from this town; and Dr. Arbuthnot and captain Andrew Arbuthnot were second cousins.

I am afraid Mrs. Arbuthnot will not long stand in need of your bounty; for she is seventy-six years of age, and suffers much from a cough and asthma. I was introduced to her about twenty years ago, by her nephew, Mr. Arbuthnot of Edinburgh, and have since been as attentive to her as I could; of which she is so sensible, that sometimes, in the extravagance of her gratitude, she has called me *her good genius*. She actually gave me that appellation in the first draught of that letter which she wrote to you about a week ago, and which I hope, madam, you have received; but I prevailed with her to change the phrase.

Since I came hither I have been seven or eight times in the sea; and I think I am already the better for it. Only, for three or four hours after every plunge, I am a little disconcerted by a confusion in the head, and a tremor in the hands; of which I am afraid you will see too many proofs in this letter: but that symptom will probably disappear when I am a little more accustomed to salt-water. I shall remain here a fortnight longer; and then the business of the college will fix me in Aberdeen for the winter.

Permit me now, madam, to thank you for your most obliging letter of the 20th of September; which, after wandering long from place to place, has overtaken me at last. The harvest scenes,

which interest you so much, were also very interesting to me in the course of my journey through England; for the weather was the finest that could be, and every scythe and sickle, and the waggons, and the gleaners, were all in motion. With peculiar satisfaction I took notice of that laudable English custom, of permitting the poor and the infirm to glean the fields.

How shall I thank you, madam, and my amiable friend, Mr. Montagu, for the kind invitation you gave my son and me to pass some part of the ensuing spring at Sandleford! Be assured, it will be a grievous disappointment to us both if we cannot get that matter accomplished. If my domestic affairs continue quiet, as I thank God they are at present, I hope we shall find no difficulty in it.

CXXIII. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1785.

THE sea-bath was of considerable service to me; and as this has been the most quiet winter I have passed these seven years, I am rather in better health than usual, and have of late been making some progress in a little work, of which you saw a sketch at Sandleford, and which you did me the honour to read and approve of. It was your approbation, and that of the bishop of Chester and sir William Forbes, that determined me to revise, correct, and enlarge it, with a view to publication. When finished, it will make two little volumes, of the size of Mr. Jeunys's book on the "*Internal Evidence of Christianity*." My plan is more comprehensive

than his, and takes in the external evidence of miracles and prophecy, as well as the internal. That you may see, madam, somewhat more distinctly what I intend, I beg leave to transcribe the following paragraph from my introduction :

“ I have met with little practical treatises, called, ‘ Ten minutes advice ’—to those who are about to engage in such or such an enterprise. These performances may have their use, though they do not contain a full detail of the business alluded to. I mean to give ‘ Two hours advice ’—to that person, who may be in danger from the books or from the company of infidels, and who is candid enough to desire to be informed, in few words, whether the evidence on the other side be so plausible, as to deserve the notice of a rational mind. If I shall satisfy him that it is, he will naturally lay me aside, and have recourse, for farther information, to those great authors, who have gone through the whole subject, and *illustrated* and *proved* many things, which the narrowness of my plan permits me only to *affirm*, or, perhaps, only to *hint at*. And (which is far the most important part of the whole procedure) he will, at the same time, reverently consult those sacred oracles, which contain the history of divine revelation; and which he will find more frequently, perhaps, and more fully, than he is aware of, to carry their own evidence along with them. And when he has done all this, in the spirit of candour, with a humble and docile mind, and with a sincere desire to know the truth and his duty, I may venture to assure him, that he will not regret the time he has employed in the study; and that, from the writings or conversation of unbel-

lievers, his faith will never be in danger any more."

Your sentiments of Dr. Arbuthnot agree entirely with mine. He had, I think, more wit and humour, and he certainly had much more virtue and learning, than either Pope or Swift. The eloquence and ostentation of Bolingbroke could never impose on Arbuthnot: he told his son, (whom I once had the honour to converse with at Richmond) that he knew Bolingbroke was an infidel, and a worthless vain man. The doctor was the son of a clergyman of this country, and was educated at the Marischal college. His grandfather lived at a place called Scots-mill, in a romantic situation on the brink of a river, about three miles from Peterhead; a place which I often visit as classic ground, as being probably the place where the doctor, when a school-boy, might often pass his holydays. I am informed, that the late Dr. Hunter bequeathed an original picture of Arbuthnot to that university at which it should appear that he had been educated. If this be true, it is the property of the Marischal college. If I knew any thing of Dr. Hunter's executors, I would write to them on the subject; as the picture has never appeared.

CXXIV. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 7th February, 1785.

THE quiet which I have enjoyed this winter, especially since I received your letter, has not only given me better health than usual, but has also left my mind at leisure to resume that little work on the "Evidence of Christianity," of which you saw a

sketch last summer. All the introductory part is now written, and the part you saw is extended to double its former size. One entire section is added on the evidence arising from prophecy; and, in evincing the usefulness of revelation, I have had occasion to make some additional remarks on the insufficiency of the ancient philosophy, and the characters of the philosophers. Whether this work shall ever be of use to others, I know not; but this I know, that it has been of considerable benefit to myself: for though, when I entered upon it, I understood my subject well enough to entertain no doubt of the goodness of my cause, yet I find, as I advance, new light continually breaking in upon me.

My list of Scotticisms is also very much enlarged. I believe I shall print it here for the convenience of correcting the press, which, in the present state of the post-office, cannot be done by a person at a distance. If you see Mr. Creech, please to ask what number of copies I shall send to him. It will be a pretty large pamphlet, and the price shall not exceed a shilling.

Dr. Campbell's preliminary dissertations are all finished: they alone will make a large quarto. I have read them all with great pleasure. They are a treasury of theological learning; and written with a degree of candour, as well as precision, of which, in matters of this kind, the world has seen very few examples.

CXXV. TO THE REV. DR. LAING.

Aberdeen, 13th February, 1785.

You may believe, that your accounts of Mrs. Arbuthnot's recovery, so far exceeding what I expected, gave me the greatest pleasure. I see now, she will soon be what she was before; which I heartily pray may be the case. I was rather in low spirits about her when I wrote last to Mrs. Montagu.

In that lady's last letter to me, dated 21st November, there are some sentences, which I shall set down here, as I know they will give Mrs. Arbuthnot pleasure.

“My mind is so much engaged by Mrs. Arbuthnot, I cannot think of any thing else. Sometimes I think I am wicked, in not being thankful enough that I am at last admitted to her friendship. I fret and repine that I had not that happiness many years sooner. Alas! what presumption is it in me to repine at this! As if I deserved the heartfelt delight of being in any degree serviceable to one of the best of human beings! What pleasure should I have had in her correspondence! While I read your account of her noble and delicate manner of receiving the friendship of one who had a high veneration for her and her aunt, I *lived along the line*, and every word excited a sensation. I am pleased to find, that by her husband she is so nearly allied to my first favourite of all the *beaux esprits*, Dr. Arbuthnot. He had none of the peevish jealousies of Mr. Pope, nor the harshness and pride of Dr. Swift. Conscious of more noble endowments, he was not

anxious to obtain the character of a wit. There is such ease, and so natural an air in his writings, as prove him to have been witty without effort or contrivance. I have heard my old friend, lord Bath, speak of him with great affection, as a most worthy and amiable man, and as a companion more pleasant and entertaining than either Pope or Swift. When I find much to admire in an author, I always wish to hear he has qualities for which I may esteem and love him; and I have listened with great pleasure to lord Bath's and the late lady Hervey's praises of Dr. Arbuthnot. With what delight must our friend at Peterhead read the works of so amiable a relation! but the only real and sincere happiness which remains for her"——

What follows is a compliment to me, which, as I do not at all deserve, I shall not transcribe.

In my answer you will suppose that I did not fail to express my approbation of her sentiments of Dr. Arbuthnot, which coincide exactly with my own. I have told her of Scots-mill, and of my making pilgrimages to it as classic ground; and I have told her every thing I know of Dr. Arbuthnot's history, so far as relates to this country. I believe, however, I omitted to tell her, that he and I are of the same county, and that I had the honour to be born within four miles of the place of his birth.

CXXVI. TO DR. PORTRUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Aberdeen, 21st October, 1785.

I READ lately Sheridan's "Life of Swift." It is panegyric from beginning to end. Swift had many good as well as great qualities; but his character was surely, upon the whole, very exceptionable. Mr. Sheridan, however, will not admit that he had any fault. Even his brutality to Stella on her death-bed, which undoubtedly hastened her dissolution, his biographer endeavours to apologize for; and he has a great deal of very unsatisfactory reasoning on the subject of the *Yahoos*. The question is not, whether *that* man is not a very odious animal who finds his own likeness in those filthy beings; but whether Swift did not intend his account of them as a satire on human nature, and an oblique censure of Providence itself in the formation of the human body and soul. That this was Swift's meaning, is to me as evident as that he wrote the book: and yet I do not find my own likeness in the *Yahoos*; I only know, for I think I could prove, that Swift wished it to be understood, as his opinion, that the human species and the *Yahoo* are equally detestable. Mr. Sheridan, too, is not, I think, over candid in what he says of lord Orrery; whose book, though not free from faults, contains some good criticism, and shows no little tenderness for the character of his hero.

I long to see Dr. Johnson's "Prayers and Meditations," and Mr. Boswell's "Journey to the Hebrides;" but it will be a great while before they find their way to this remote corner.

Has your lordship read Dr. Reid's "Essays on the Intellectual Faculties of Man?" Those readers, who have been conversant in the modern philosophy of the mind, as it appears in the writings of Des Cartes, Malebranche, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, will be much entertained with this work, which does great honour to the sagacity and patience of the author. It contains the principles of his former book laid down on a larger scale, and applied to a greater variety of subjects. Ever since Plato, or rather Pythagoras, took it into his head, that the soul perceives only what is contiguous to, or enclosed in, its own substance, and consequently perceives not outward things themselves, but only ideas of them, this ideal system has been increasing in bulk and absurdity; and it is astonishing to see, that so many men of parts could be the dupes of it. All this rubbish is now cleared away, and a happy riddance it is. Dr. Reid treats his opponents and their tenets with a respect and a solemnity, that sometimes tempt me to smile. His style is clear and simple; and his aversion to the word *idea* so great, that I think he never once uses it in delivering his own opinions. That little word has indeed been a source of much perplexity to metaphysicians; but it is easy to use it without ambiguity; and it has now established itself in the language so effectually, that we cannot well do without it. It was not without reason that the learned Stillingfleet took the alarm at Locke's indiscreet use of that word. It was indeed an *ignis fatuus* to poor Mr. Locke, and decoyed him, in spite of his excellent understanding, into a thousand pits and quagmires. Berkeley it bewildered still more; and it

Aberdeen,

Mr. Boswell's book* is as
 have just gone through it. H
 as Dr. Johnson always was ; &
 to both. But I cannot approv
 work. To publish a man's le
 sation, without his consent, is
 quite fair : for how many thin
 laxation, or in friendly correspo
 throw out, which he would i
 again ; and what a restraint v
 cial intercourse, if one were t
 word one utters would be en
 Mr. Boswell indeed says, that
 who need be under any appreh
 This is an

would be made of it; and laid before the public. I approve of the Greek proverb, that says, "I hate a bottle-companion with a memory." If my friend, after eating a bit of mutton with me, should go to the coffee-house, and there give an account of every thing that had passed, I believe I should not take it well.

Of Dr. Johnson himself, as well as of others, many things are told which ought to have been suppressed; such, I mean, as are not in any respect remarkable, and such as seem to betray rather infirmity or captiousness, than genius or virtue. Johnson said of "The Man of the World," that he found little or nothing in it. Why should this be recorded? Is there any wit in it; or is it likely to be of any use? The greatest dunce on earth is capable of saying as *good* a thing. Of a very promising young gentleman, to whom Dr. Johnson was under the highest obligations, (for he had risked his life in Johnson's service,) and who, to the great grief of all who knew him, unfortunately perished at sea about ten years ago, Dr. Johnson said, that it was pity he was not more intellectual. Why should this be recorded? I will allow, that one friend might, without blame, say this to another in confidence; but to publish it to the world, when it cannot possibly give pleasure to any person, and will probably give pain to some, is, in my judgment, neither wit nor gratitude; and I am sure Mr. Boswell, who is a very good-natured man, would have seen it in this light, if he had given himself time to think of it. At Aberdeen the two travellers were most hospitably entertained, as they themselves acknowledge; and when they

left it, they said to one another, that they had heard at Aberdeen nothing which deserved attention. There was nothing in *saying* this : but why is it recorded ? For no reason that I can imagine, unless it be in order to return evil for good. I found so many passages of this nature in the book, that, upon the whole, it left rather a disagreeable impression upon my mind ; though I readily own there are many things in it which pleased me.

The bishop of Chester's thoughts on this subject are so pertinent and so well expressed, that I am sure you will like to see them : " You will," says his lordship in a letter which I received yesterday, " be entertained with Mr. Boswell's book, and edified with some of Johnson's prayers ; but you will wish that many things in both those publications had been omitted ; and, perhaps, if they had not existed at all, it would have been better still. Johnson's friends will absolutely kill him with kindness. His own character, if left to itself, would naturally raise him very high in the estimation of mankind ; but by loading it with panegyric, anecdotes, lives, journals, &c. and by hanging round it even all his little foibles and infirmities, they will sink it lower in the opinion of the best judges of merit. I saw lately a letter from Mrs. Piozzi, (late Mrs. Thrale,) in which she announces her ' Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson ' to be published this winter ; and after that are to follow his Letters to her, &c. Mr. Boswell also is to give us his Life ; and sir John Hawkins is writing another, to be prefixed to a complete edition of his works. Our modest and worthy friend, Mr. Langton, is the only one who observes a profound silence on this occa-

ation ; and yet no one could speak to better purpose, if he pleased, and if he thought it would answer any good end."

Johnson's harsh and foolish censurè of Mrs. Montagu's book does not surprise me ; for I have heard him speak contemptuously of it. It is, for all that, one of the best, most original, and most elegant pieces of criticism in our language, or any other. Johnson had many of the talents of a critic ; but his want of temper, his violent prejudices, and something, I am afraid, of an envious turn of mind, made him often a very unfair one. Mrs. Montagu was very kind to him ; but Mrs. Montagu has more wit than any body ; and Johnson could not bear that any person should be thought to have wit but himself. Even lord Chesterfield, and, what is more strange, even Mr. Burke, he would not allow to have wit. He preferred Smollett to Fielding. He would not grant that Armstrong's poem on "Health," or the tragedy of "Douglas," had any merit. He told me, that he never read Milton through, till he was obliged to do it, in order to gather words for his Dictionary. He spoke very peevishly of the masque of Comus ; and when I urged that there was a great deal of exquisite poetry in it ; "Yes," said he, "but it is like gold hid under a rock ;" to which I made no reply ; for indeed I did not well understand it. Pray, did you ever see Mr. Potter's "Remarks on Johnson's Lives of the Poets ?" It is very well worth reading.

By a Latin letter which I lately received from Holland, I am informed, that Dutch translations of the first part of my last book, and of my "*Remarks on Laughter*," have been published, the one

at Haerlem, the other at Dort. I am greatly obliged to the Dutch. The "Essay on Truth" they translated twelve years ago; and I have a copy of the version, which, I am told by those who understand the language, is very exact.

I become every day more and more doubtful of the propriety of publishing the Scotticisms. Our language (I mean the English) is degenerating very fast; and many phrases, which I know to be Scottish idioms, have got into it of late years: so that many of my strictures are liable to be opposed by authorities which the world accounts unexceptionable. However, I shall send you the manuscript, since you desire it, and let you dispose of it as you please.

CXXVIII. TO THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

Aberdeen, 21st July, 1786.

HAD not my right-hand been disabled by a bruise, of which I have not entirely got the better, I should have sooner returned my grateful acknowledgments to your lordship, for your most obliging letter. Your approbation of my little book* does me the greatest honour, and will have much influence in rendering it successful. Lord Hailes, with whom I passed a day not long ago, is also well pleased with it; and, in general, it seems likely to meet with a reception far more favourable than I had reason to expect. It is indeed a very brief summary; but my friends are pleased to think it has on that ac-

* "Evidences of the Christian Religion."

count a better chance, in these days, to be read, than if it had been of a greater size.

Before I put it to the press, I was very anxious to see your lordship's "Sermons," (preached at Lincoln's-inn,) of which I had heard such an account as greatly raised my curiosity. But even the best books find their way slowly into this remote corner. I have read the book once and again with great delight; and it will be my own fault if I am not the better for it as long as I live. My approbation can add nothing to its fame; yet I must beg leave to say, that I particularly admire your happy talent in expounding difficult texts, and the perspicuity, conciseness, and elegance of your style; which I look upon as the perfection of pulpit-elocution; being equally captivating to the learned, and intelligible to the simple.

Though my health will not now permit me to attempt a long journey, yet I still flatter myself with the hope that I shall one day avail myself of your kind invitation, and pay my duty to your lordship at Hartlebury. The last time I was in England I did seriously intend it, but was prevented by illness.

CCXIX. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 14th September, 1786.

I AM indebted to you for two very affectionate and entertaining letters, and will endeavour to answer them as soon as my head and hand are a little better settled. At present I can hardly hold a pen.

I am very happy to hear of your visit to Hutton.

I often wished the bishop of Chester and you acquainted. He wrote me word of his having met with lady Forbes and you, and of the great satisfaction he had in the hopes of a visit from you. You would like Mrs. Porteus greatly. Her cheerfulness, good sense, and goodness of heart, make her a most excellent companion for the bishop, and exceedingly beloved by all who know her. As you were but a day at Hunton, you would see but little of lady Twisden, who is as remarkable for modesty as for every other virtue; but if you had been with her for some days, you would have found her most worthy of that character which I think I formerly gave you of her.

We have had much talk about uniting our two colleges.* I was desired to write to you about it long ago; but would not then trouble you, as lady Forbes was indisposed; and of late I have not been able to write. The union is much approved of by the country in general; but it is opposed by the principal and six of the professors of King's College. I shall tell you more about it very soon, and send you some memorials and other papers.

CXXX. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 30th November, 1786.

I AM greatly obliged to you, my dear sir, for your very kind letter of the 16th; no part of which gave me more pleasure, than the account you fa-

* The King's and Marischal colleges of Old and New Aberdeen, the scheme of which was subsequently abandoned.

your me with of your son's proficiency. You did very right in sending him to pass some months in England. At his age it is not so difficult, as it comes to be afterwards, to get the better of a provincial dialect; and I am very happy to understand that he has acquired so much of the English pronunciation; Greek and Latin he had in sufficient abundance before. It will likewise be of singular use to him to have been in a strange country for a little time; for such we may call England, notwithstanding we all live under the same government; so very different are the customs and modes, both of thinking and speaking, from those of Scotland. His passing a few months in France next year will tend still more to his improvement, by presenting him with a system of manners still more different from those of his own country, and by preparing him betimes for a correct pronunciation of the French tongue. Youth is the best time both for acquiring languages, and for getting the better of those national prejudices, which are so apt to adhere to the man who has never stirred from home; and which are equally unfriendly to Christian charity, to true politeness, and, I may add, to the advancement of a man's interest even in this world.

The opposition to the projected scheme of uniting the colleges is much to be regretted; but, as the voice of the country is so clearly on the side of those who favour the union, I would fain hope, that in time the opposition may become more faint, and at last be withdrawn altogether. At present, matters seem to be at a stand. The arguments on both sides have been prosecuted with a minuteness, and

perhaps, too, with an acrimony, which was unnecessary; but such things must always be expected in such cases; and were an union, after all, to take place, I am persuaded, that those altercations would be immediately forgotten, and that we should be better friends than ever. Such revolutions happen in love and friendship; and why may they not happen in a contest like the present? in which, properly speaking, there is no hostility; the only thing aimed at being to make both societies more respectable than ever they were before, without injury to any private interest whatever. I have the pleasure to inform you, that Marischal college is this year more crowded with students than it has been any time these fifty years. Our public hall is indeed quite full, so that there is reason to think it was never better filled than at present. The other college is not so flourishing. Their students are said to be under ninety; ours to be above a hundred and forty. I will not say that this account is perfectly exact, but have reason to think it is nearly so.

I am just now reading lord Hailes's new performance against Mr. Gibbon. There is much learning in it, and great knowledge of the subject; but I wish he would make his reasoning a little more pointed and popular. He often leaves his reader to draw the conclusions from his premises; which is the most inoffensive way of conducting controversy, but not perhaps the most instructive. It gives me also concern to see so very able and so learned a writer affect sometimes the new-fangled cant style.

Your account of sir J. Reynolds's new picture

is very entertaining. It is an unpromising subject; but sir Joshua's invention will supply every thing.*

CXXXI. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d January, 1787.

Miss Bowdler's "Essays" are just come to hand, and give me a very high idea both of the head and of the heart of the excellent author. Such examples of piety and resignation rarely occur; and the person who publishes them does an important service to mankind. The preface too, though short, is admirably written, and gives such an emphasis to what follows in the book, as cannot fail to recommend religion to the most inattentive, if they will only take the trouble to read this truly valuable work. I was wonderfully struck and pleased with the beauty and propriety of the motto from Ariosto; and it brings tears into my eyes, when I consider it as an apostrophe to a departed saint. I beg you will return my most grateful and affectionate acknowledgments to the lady who honours me with this present, which I value more than I can express, which I trust has already done me good, and which I am sure will do me a great deal more if it is not my own fault. I am no stranger to the character of this lady's family, having often heard of it from Mrs. Montagu: and, if I mistake not, a brother of hers once did me the honour to sup at my house in

* The infant Hercules strangling the Serpents; a large picture, painted for the late empress of Russia.

Aberdeen, in company with Mrs. Macphew, Mr. Robinson. He seemed to be a very intelligent young man, and I was much pleased with the conversation. I should be very happy to hear that he is alive and well.

I have had two letters lately from Mr. Chester, in both which he and Mrs. Portman were particularly remembered to Lady Fortescue. He informs me, that the subscription price of the new edition of Shakspeare, adorned with drawings by the best hands, from designs by the best painters, will not be less than one hundred guineas for a copy. At this rate, one shall give the price of a new book for a *sight* of this. However, the works of this kind do honour to the country that produces them, and raise a laudable emulation among artists, and at the same time afford foreigners a high idea of the genius, in whom they are undertaken. The French have done themselves, and very justly, on a splendid edition of La Fontaine's "Fables," which sold for twelve or fourteen pounds; but this will be nothing to this. Clarke's edition of Shakspeare was lately sold by auction in London for thirty pounds: it is indeed a most splendid work. The "Spectator" speaks of it as the glory of the press; but the original price was only five pounds. The finest copy I ever saw of it is in the library at Gordon-castle.

CXXXII. TO THE HON. MR. BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 5th March, 1787.

I AM happy to inform you, that on the first of March you were unanimously re-elected lord-rector of Marischal college for the ensuing year. Your assessors are also re-elected; and major Mercer is re-elected dean of faculty. This matter was conducted with the greatest unanimity. All the college, students as well as professors, are very sensible of the obligations they are under to you for your constant attention to the interests of the society.

You are very partial, my dear sir, to my son's little attempt in Latin poetry; which, however, I acknowledge to be rather extraordinary, considering his years and opportunities. It may show, that classical learning is not quite so much neglected at Marischal college as some of our southern neighbours would wish the public to believe. He has employed himself, during this winter, in a variety of compositions, both Latin and English, both prose and verse; all which he will be solicitous to lay before his rector, when a proper opportunity occurs.

Finding that he is fond of a studious and academical life, I have been revolving a plan for him, which to you, as a friend, and as the first acting magistrate in the university, I would have mentioned two or three weeks ago, if I had been able to write. I have laid it before the college, in a letter, a copy whereof I beg leave to send you:

" To the Principal and other Professors of Marshal college.

" GENTLEMEN,

" I TAKE the liberty to address you on a subject, which is interesting to me, and of some importance to the college; and I do it in writing, because it is reasonable that ye should deliberate upon it when I am not present.

" The state of my health for some time past, though it has not as yet hindered me from performing the duties of my office, has however been such as leads me often to think both of an assistant and of a successor; and many obvious reasons make me wish that one and the same person may serve in both capacities. It is natural for me to prefer my son to others in a matter of this kind, as he likes an academical and studious life; and as he is, if not sufficiently qualified, at least as well qualified for the office as I was, after I had been seven years a professor.

" It is by no means my intention to give over teaching. On the contrary, I will never permit any body to teach my class, as long as I am able to teach it. For habits of seven-and-twenty years standing are not easily got the better of; and I find so much amusement in this business, which on all ordinary occasions gives me no trouble, that, if I were to retire from it, I am certain that my health would be much worse than it is.

" But it would be a great relief to my mind to know, that, in the event of my being confined by illness, the business of the class would suffer no

interruption : and I presume, that if my assistant were to appear in it *as a professor*, it would be no difficult matter for him, with my advice and influence, to establish his authority. If he live to see the beginning of next session, my son will be in the twentieth year of his age.

“ Of his behaviour and proficiency while at college, I need not say any thing ; as that is sufficiently known to those professors under whom he studied, and from whom he received so many marks of particular attention and kindness. It may be proper, however, that I lay before the college some things concerning him, which they cannot be supposed to know : and, in doing this, I do nothing more for him than justice would require me to do for any other young man in his circumstances, and whom I equally well knew.

“ Having for some years had this employment in view for him, I took pains to give such a direction to his studies, as might imperceptibly prepare him for it. And I am well enough pleased to find, that, though he has been a very assiduous student in all the parts of learning that are taught here, the bent of his genius seems to lie towards theology, classical learning, morality, poetry, and criticism. In Greek, he has read Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, the Batrachomyomachia, and a great part of Hesiod, the greatest part of Xenophon, the Phædo of Plato, six or seven books of Euclid, Arrian's History of Alexander, two Plays of Sophocles, part of Herodotus and Plutarch, of the Septuagint and New Testament, the Ethics and Poetics of Aristotle, Longinus, several of the Odes of Pindar, &c. Latin

he understands better than any other person of his years I have ever known; he wrote it pretty-correctly when he was a boy; and, as I have sometimes conversed with him in that language, I know that, with a little practice, he could speak it easily; he is also making good progress in the French tongue. From his early years I accustomed him to read no books but good ones, and to study every thing he read with grammatical and critical accuracy. The moral sciences, as far as I teach them; he knows very well; and, as he has a methodical head and ready elocution, I flatter myself a little practice would make him a good teacher. Specimens of his composition, both Latin and English, both verse and prose, shall be laid before the college, if they desire it.

“ To all this it may not perhaps be impertinent to add, that as he has passed part of several summers in Edinburgh, and two in London, and other parts of England, and visited wherever I visited, he may be supposed to have seen a little of the world; of which, though he is rather silent in company, I find he has been no inaccurate observer.

“ If the college agree to recommend him to his majesty, as a person fit to be appointed my assistant and successor, I would farther request, that it may be done as soon as possible. This, I think, would be an advantage to the college, as well as to him and me. For if he were once sure of the place, I would make him lay other studies aside for some time, and employ himself in preparing a course of lectures; which, as all my papers are open to him, he would not find it a difficult matter to do. I

could also teach him how to make many improvements in my plan, which I have long had in view, but could never execute for want of health.

"I need not suggest to my colleagues the propriety of keeping this affair secret. Were it to be talked of, and after all to miscarry, it would hurt my son's interest, and make him feel the disappointment the more heavily. He knows nothing of this application; nor do I intend that he shall know any thing of it, till I see what the issue is likely to be. I am," &c.

To this letter the college returned a very polite answer, to this purpose: That they were so well satisfied with my son's proficiency and character, that they would immediately, notwithstanding his youth, grant the recommendation I requested, if it were not for the present critical state of the business of the union. They therefore desired me to let the matter rest a little, till the issue of that affair could be more certainly foreseen. In this I thankfully acquiesced.

However, that I might, if possible, secure a majority, in the event of the union taking place, I mentioned my scheme to Mr. Professor * * * * *. He entered very warmly into my views, and mentioned the thing in confidence to Dr. * * * * * and Mr. * * * * *. They were as favourable as I could have expected; and, though they made no promise, which, indeed, was not solicited, they spoke in very strong terms of what they were pleased to call the delicacy of my conduct with respect to my colleagues and to them. They seemed to think, that I might have carried my point by a private applica-

tion to the crown in my own name. This might perhaps be true ; but I would not do a thing so disrespectful to the Marischal college.

I threatened you with a long letter, and you see I have kept my word. But, as my almanack tells me that your terms are over, I hope you will excuse me. You are interested in this business in more respects than one ; for I took the liberty some time ago to execute a deed, in which you and sir William Forbes, and some other gentlemen, are named the guardians of my two boys, as I think I told you before.

CXXXIII. TO MISS VALENTINE.

London, 20th July, 1787.

I AM just returned from Windsor, where I passed three days. I went thither, partly to see some friends, but chiefly that I might pay my respects to the king and queen. They both received me in the most gracious manner. I saw the king first on the Terrace, where he knew me at first sight, and did me the honour to converse with me a considerable time. Next morning I saw him again at prayers in his chapel, where he was pleased to introduce me to the queen, who inquired very kindly after my health ; observed, that many years had passed since she saw me last ; regretted the bad weather which I had met with at Windsor, (for it rained incessantly,) which, said she, has made your friends see less of you than they wished ; and, after some other conversation, her majesty and the princess Elizabeth, who attended her, made a slight curtsy, and stepped into the carriage that waited for them at the chapel-door. The king remained with us for

some time longer, and talked of various matters, particularly the union of the colleges. He asked whether I was for or against it? I told him I was a friend to the union. "But lord Kinnoull," said he, "is violent against it:" (this, by the bye, I did not know before.) The king spoke jocularly of my having become fat: "I remember the time," said he, "when you were as lean as Dr. * * * * there," pointing to a gentleman who was standing by. "You look very well," said his majesty to me, "and I am convinced you are well, if you would only think so: Do, Dr. Heberden," said the king, "convince Dr. Beattie that he is in perfect health." (Dr. Heberden was also standing by.) "I have been endeavouring, sir," returned the doctor, "to do so." After two such attestations of my health, as those of the king and Dr. Heberden, I suppose I need not say more on that subject. The truth is, I am better than I was. The giddiness has not troubled me but one day since I came to London.

At Windsor I met with several other friends, particularly lady Pembroke, Mrs. Delany, Mr. and Mrs. De Luc; and I was often with the famous Miss Burney, author of "Cecilia," who has got an office in the queen's household, and is one of the most agreeable young women I have met with; has great vivacity, joined with a most unassuming gentleness and simplicity of manners.

I passed an afternoon, a few days ago, with lord Rodney. I was very glad to meet with that celebrated veteran, and much pleased with his conversation. He is of the middle size, rather lean, has handsome features for an old man, piercing blue eyes, and is very well bred,

CXXXIV. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Hunton, near Maidstone, 7th August, 1787.

I CAME to Hunton the 28th of last month. Of the scenery of that beautiful place I need say nothing to you, who are well acquainted with it. Every thing is so exactly the same that it was, and my memory of every thing is so accurate, that the three years which have intervened since I was last here, seem to have dwindled into as many days. The bishop and Mrs. Porteus are perfectly well, and desire their best respects to lady Forbes and you.

Last week we had a visit from a gentleman, (Mr. Boissier,) in whose history there are some particulars, which I think will entertain you. He is a man of fortune, and of a French family, about fifty years of age, was born in England, and commonly resides at Bath, but has passed a great part of his time abroad, where it is evident that he has kept the very best company. He speaks Italian, Spanish, and French, and is well conversant in literature; and has so much of the French vivacity, that if he had not spoken English with the propriety of a native, I should have taken him for a Frenchman. As Moses was trained up in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, it was this gentleman's chance to be educated in all the folly of French philosophy: he was, indeed, an avowed, nay a barefaced infidel. In this temper of mind he went to hear the bishop of Chester preach at Bath, about two years ago. The text was, "Truly this was the Son of God." He was so much struck with the bishop's eloquence and reasoning, that he made no scruple to declare

to his friends, that his mind was changed, and that he was determined to study the Christian religion with candour, and without delay. An acquaintance soon took place between the bishop and him, and they were mutually pleased with each other. Books were put into his hands, and among others my little book.* To shorten my story, he is now a sincere Christian; and is just going to publish a "Vindication of Christianity," which he has translated from the French of Mons. Bonnet. This work I have seen, and think very highly of it, as I do of the author and translator, who is truly a very agreeable, sensible, well-bred man. The sermon which, by the providence of God, was the cause of this conversion, the bishop, at my desire, preached to us last Sunday. I never in my life heard more animated eloquence, or a more forcible piece of argumentation; and the bishop exceeded himself in the delivery of it.†

CXXXV. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th November, 1787.

AFTER having been for so many months a wanderer, I am at last become stationary, and sit down to give a brief account of what has befallen me since I tore myself away from Sandleford. The chief reason of my leaving, so soon as I did, that delightful place, and still more delightful society, was, though I did not then mention it, the state of my son's health.

- "Evidences of the Christian Religion."
- This discourse here mentioned is the 14th in the second volume of the bishop of London's "Sermons."

He had, at that time, symptoms of approaching illness, particularly an unconquerable sensation of cold in his hands and feet; which made me anxious to put him, as soon as possible, under the care of my medical friends in London. He was taken ill, as I expected, first more slightly, and afterwards with such violence, and so many alarming appearances, that for several days he seemed to be in great danger. My friend, Dr. Lettsom, attended him with his usual humanity; and, as soon as he thought it safe to remove from London, advised me to begin my journey. We travelled very slowly, and had every advantage that could be derived from good roads and good weather; but, though he bore the motion of the carriage well enough, he continued to be so weak, that I was often at a loss to determine whether I should proceed or stop. He himself wished to get forward, especially to get to Morpeth, where Dr. Keith lives, a particular friend of ours, of whose affectionate temper and medical abilities we both have the highest opinion. At Morpeth we arrived at last, and were so lucky as to find our friend at home, who ordered something which did much good; but the weakness still continued, and the disorder appeared to be only alleviated, but by no means removed. At Edinburgh, where we rested ten days, I was advised to take him to Peterhead, which I did accordingly; and the air and mineral-water of that place had so good an effect, that, by the end of October, when we were obliged to return home, I thought him, and he thought himself, perfectly recovered. He has been regularly inducted into his new office: but I *do not* intend that he shall have any thing to do

this year, but to amuse himself, and recover strength; as I find myself well enough to manage all the business without difficulty. Indeed I have now better health than I remember to have enjoyed for some years: and it would be strange if it were otherwise, considering the very great attention and kindness which I met with at Sandleford and Hunton; and, since my return to the North, at Gordoncastle, where I made a visit of three weeks, while my son was at Peterhead. The duchess desired me to present to you her best respects; which, however, I presume her grace will deliver in person, as she is now on her way to London, where she means to pass the winter.

At Peterhead I gave Mrs. Arbuthnot the money which you committed to my care, and I was happy to find her wonderfully well, considering her great age. I need not tell you with what gratitude she acknowledged your bounty, nor how anxiously minute she was in her inquiries after your health, and that of Mr. and Mrs. Montagu, and their lovely child. She is naturally of an inquisitive turn, as solitary people of good parts generally are; but, where her heart and affections are engaged, there is no end of her interrogatories. It gives me no little pleasure to observe, how much to the better her poor old house is changed since she has had the honour to be under your patronage. The roof, which was entirely decayed, has undergone a thorough repair; her moth-eaten tables and chairs, which were on the point of falling to pieces by their own weight, have given place to a set of new ones, not fine indeed, but neat and substantial; the

days, and
woman.
by a letter from his
friend, the bishop of
see of London. Few
so much pleasure. This
great talents for business
find ample scope; yet
so such a distance from
to such bodily fatigue,
diocese often made ne-

WILLIAM FORBES.

Merdeen, 10th December, 1787.
Dear Sir,
I am to you by Mr. * * * * *,
I was ill. My son on that
day, for the first time, the ma-
ster, and acquitted himself not
only on and theirs, but also to his
satisfaction that he should ap-
pear in his trial till next winter; but I
was satisfied him
in his business. However, I do not
either *assist* or *succeed* me, as
it. He is greatly obliged to
you for your concern about him, and desires
to be in your service. His health was im-

bold
Lon
the
to be
having
Miss Bo
The p
objects,
I am no
men, and
fer Virgil
are other
and Tass
read Mil
gather w
has spol
known
the oth
timent
with
and

proved by Peterhead ; but he is not robust, and I am obliged to exert my authority in moderating his application to study.

Every body must approve greatly of your sending Mr. Forbes abroad, previously to his entering on business. Next to a good conscience, nothing tends more to the happiness of life than habits of activity and industry begun in early youth, so as to settle into a permanent disposition before one arrives at manhood : and I never see, without pity, a young man of fortune who is bred to no business.

The friends you inquire after, sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, &c. were all well when I left London ; but I did not this year see so much of them as usual, as my health would not permit me to be much in town. I regret exceedingly my not having had an opportunity to pay my respects to Miss Bowdler.

The passage in the " Lounger," to which she objects, seems to me to be not very accurate ; and I am not sure that I understand it. There are men, and those too of masculine minds, who prefer Virgil to Homer ; Mr. Burke is one : and there are others who prefer Metastasio to Shakspeare, and Tasso to Milton. Johnson told me he never read Milton through till he read him in order to gather words for his " Dictionary ;" and though he has spoken *civilly* of him in his " Lives," it is well known that he did not do so in conversation. On the other hand, I have known women, whose sentiments were the same with mine, and I suppose with the " Lounger's," in regard to those great authors ; and who, for all that, had minds as deli-

cate, and as truly feminine, as any of their sex. Few women have the means of judging with precision of the comparative merit of Virgil and Homer; for in order to do that, it is absolutely necessary to throw all translations aside, and read them in their own language. Pope's translation is a very pleasing poem, and I believe a great favourite with the fair sex; but has nothing of Homer, except the story and the characters, the *manner* being totally different: Dryden's "Virgil" is not a very pleasing book, and conveys not any tolerable idea of the original; of whose tenderness, pathos, and delicacy, and uniform majesty of expression and numbers, Dryden had no just relish, and whose language he did not understand so perfectly as he ought to have done.

Of the superiority of male to female minds, much has been said and written, but perhaps in too general terms. In what relates to the peculiar business and duty of either sex, the genius of that sex will I believe, be found to have the superiority. A man though he could suckle, would not make so good a nurse as a woman; and though the woman were in bodily strength equal to the man, there are in her constitution many things which would make her less fit than he is for what may be called the external economy of a family. Matters of learning, taste, and science, are not more the *natural* province of the one sex than of the other; and, with regard to these, were they to have the same education and opportunities, the minds of the two sexes would be found to approach more nearly to equality. The same *education*, however, they cannot have, because each must be trained up for its own

peculiar business; nor the same *opportunities*, because many scenes of observation are open to men, from which women are, by their reserve and modesty, excluded; and some open to women, to which men are, with great propriety, though for a different reason, denied admittance. If one were to enter into the detail of all these particulars, I imagine it would not be difficult to say what sorts of writing and parts of learning the two sexes might cultivate with *equal* success, and in what women would be *superior* to men, and men *superior* to women; and the inferences, as they occur to me at present, would, if I mistake not, receive confirmation from the history of literature.

CXXXVII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 5th March, 1788.

I SCARCE remember when my attention was so much engrossed by a number of little matters, as it has been for the last two months. This must be my apology for not sooner acknowledging the receipt of your very kind and affecting letter. After what Dr. Hay told me last summer, I had no hopes of your son's recovery; but the account of his death gave me pain, as I well knew what lady Forbes and you would suffer on that occasion. You have been tried with many severe afflictions of the same kind, but have borne them as became you; so that they will, in their consequences, prove matter of everlasting triumph.

It is with great pleasure I see your name in the newspapers, subjoined to a petition to the house of

commons in behalf of the poor negroes. The society to which I belong, resolved some time ago to present a similar petition, but the thing is delayed till we hear from our chancellor on the subject; and he is now very infirm, so that I fear we shall be too late in our application. I wrote a "Discourse on Slavery," particularly that of the negroes, about ten years ago, and had thoughts lately of revising and publishing it. So much was I in earnest, that I had actually transcribed about a fourth part of it; when, having occasion to consult some authorities, which were not at hand, I foresaw that, let me be ever so diligent, the fate of Mr. Wilberforce's intended motion on this subject would, in all probability, be determined before my little book could be got ready; and so I dropped the scheme, at least for the present: which I have the less reason to regret, as I had little to say which has not been said by others, who may be thought to have better means of information. I earnestly pray that our legislature may have the grace to do something effectual in this business, so as to clear the British character of a stain, which is, indeed, of the blackest dye. The freest nation and best-natured people on earth are, as matters now stand, the patrons of slavery, and of a slavery more severe than is warranted by the laws of France or Spain, or of any other country in Europe. What an inconsistency is this; and what a reproach! I am not, however, one of those who think that our negroes ought immediately to be made free. That would be dangerous, and is, I fear, impracticable. But to mitigate in the mean time the horrors of their slavery,

and to prepare matters for a gradual abolition of it, seems to me to be neither dangerous nor difficult.

I have been looking into Dr. Reid's book on "The Active Powers of Man." It is written with his usual perspicuity and acuteness; is in some parts very entertaining; and to me, who have been obliged to think so much on those subjects, is very interesting throughout. The question concerning Liberty and Necessity is very fully discussed, and very ably; and, I think, nothing more needs be said about it. I could have wished that Dr. Reid had given a fuller enumeration of the passions, and been a little more particular in illustrating the duties of morality. But his manner is, in all his writings, more turned to speculation than to practical philosophy; which may be owing to his having employed himself so much in the study of Locke, Hume, Berkeley, and other theorists; and partly, no doubt, to the habits of study and modes of conversation which were fashionable in this country in his younger days. If I were not personally acquainted with the doctor, I should conclude, from his books, that he was rather too warm an admirer of Mr. Hume. He confutes, it is true, some of his opinions; but pays them much more respect than they are entitled to.

I have the pleasure to inform you that we have heard from our chancellor, who approves highly of our declaring our sentiments with respect to the slave-trade, in a petition to the house of commons. No time was lost. I had prepared the petition; which was instantly signed, and sent off

Mr. Boissier has published his "Translation of M. Bonnet's Inquiries concerning Christianity," and has done me the honour to send me a copy; which I shall read as soon as I can command a day's leisure. In his preface he mentions bishop Porteus as the first "who traced out to him the road which leads to truth." From what I have seen of this book, I should be apprehensive that the author's manner is rather abrupt, and too abstruse to be popular, at least in this country. However, the world is under obligations to him, and to his worthy translator, for declaring themselves in so explicit a manner the friends of religion; and as M. Bonnet's character is very high in France, I hope his book will do a great deal of good.

At my spare hours, which have been very few this winter, I am preparing to do, what, if circumstances had permitted, I ought to have done long ago,—to print an abridgement, (a very brief one) of my lectures on moral philosophy and logic. It is intended for no other purpose but to assist the memory of those students who attend my class; and, therefore, though I shall print, I am in doubt whether I should publish it. The students, by paying for their copies, will, in time, indemnify me for print and paper, which is all I shall ask in the pecuniary way. Notwithstanding all my care to be concise, I find it will extend to two octavos; the first of which will contain "Elements of Moral Science," and the second, "Elements of Logic." Under logic I comprehend, not only the philosophy of evidence, but likewise every thing that relates to language, composition, and criticism. Hitherto it has been my way, as it was that of my predecessor,

to make the students take down in writing an abstract of the lectures and conversations; and this method is not without its advantages; but such abstracts, being written in great haste, were not always correct, and took up a good deal of time. The time which I shall save by using a printed text book, I intend to employ in commenting upon classic authors, and other profitable exercises.*

You will be glad to hear that Sunday schools are likely to do good here. Eight have been set a-going, and are supported by subscription.

My son desires his best respects. My cough has obliged me to employ him more frequently, in the morning meeting at eight, than I wished to do: but he likes the business, and has now had experience of almost all the varieties of it. He has also been composing some lectures, one of which, accompanied with a model in pasteboard, is an account of Raymond Lully's mill for making books, alluded to by Dr. Campbell in the "Philosophy of Rhetoric." He got Raymond's book in the college library, and made the mill exactly according to the author's directions.

CXXXVIII. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Peterhead, 3d May, 1788.

THE book I have in view will not be a mere syllabus, like the pamphlet which Dr. Blair published;

* This abridgement of his lectures, Dr. Beattie published under the title of "Elements of Moral Science;" the first volume in the year 1790, the second volume in the year 1795.

nor a collection of aphorisms, like Dr. Ferguson's "Institutes:" in its plan it will more resemble Dr. James Gregory's "*Conspectus Medicinæ Theoreticæ*;" only it will be in English. If I live to execute my purpose, it will comprehend the substance of all my lectures and *conversations*, (for I often teach in the Socratic method, by question and answer,) with the omission of such illustrations, facts, and reasonings only, as cannot be expressed in few words. The first volume will contain the "Philosophy of the Human Mind; Principles of Natural Religion; Moral Philosophy; and Politics:" and the second, "Logic, or the philosophy of evidence; and Rhetoric, or the *Belles Lettres*." About one hundred and forty large quarto pages of the first volume are written; and I hope, if my health does not prevent me, to have it in the press before the end of the year.

The same post that brought your last most agreeable favour, brought also a letter, with two pamphlets, from the bishop of London. The bishop is very urgent with me, as you are, to publish my papers on the slave trade. He says they will come in good season if they appear before the next session of parliament, for that nothing in that business will be done this session. The privy-council, he says, have been at uncommon pains to ascertain the exact nature of the African slave trade, and the state of the slaves in our West India islands. His lordship also wishes me to subjoin, as an appendix to my papers, an examination of an extraordinary pamphlet, which has just appeared, to prove the lawfulness, or, as the author calls it, the *licitness* of the slave trade, from the Scriptures of the Old

and New Testament. This pamphlet he has sent me, but I have not yet got time to read it. It is the work of a Spanish Jesuit of the name of Harris, who, it seems, is connected with the slave merchants of Liverpool, by whose means he hopes to obtain preferment in the church of England, to which he is willing to conform: his pamphlet is dedicated to the mayor, aldermen, &c. of Liverpool. The slave dealers exult in this champion, and say that his work is unanswerable; but the bishop of London says it is mere Jesuitical sophistry. From what I have seen of it, I should think it an easy matter to answer it; but whether I shall be able to do this, I know not. My health is a great hinderance to all my projects.

The other pamphlet which the bishop sent me, is a "Pastoral Letter to the English Clergy in the West Indies," who are all, it seems, subject to his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It is short, but very elegant, and very like himself and his station. It relates chiefly to two things: the conversion and education of the negroes, which he earnestly and powerfully recommends; and the qualifications which he insists on finding in all those West Indians who may apply to him for holy orders. My little book of "Evidences," is one of those which his lordship is pleased to recommend to their attention.

CXXXIX. TO DR. PORTEUS, BISHOP OF LONDON.

Peterhead, 3d July, 1788.

As soon as it is in my power I shall give the Rev.

upon a candid and
to provoke indignation : for tr
lemn for laughter. He preter
of the Scripture, and zeal fo
nity ; and all the while he is
Scripture, in order to vind
impious and inhuman practi
the sublunary creation. He
for the world offer an apolo
pression, or cruelty, that i
by dealers in slaves ; he w
calls " the African slave"
know not whether I und
will remove all oppressi
from that trade, I promi
his abstract notions : th
idea ; as harmless as
the names of os

that has nothing cruel, oppressive, or unjust in it, with all my heart; let it be set a-going as soon as possible. To such a trade the British legislature will have no objection; and I trust they will never tolerate any other. They have entered into this business with a generous alacrity that does them infinite honour; and will soon, I hope, make such regulations as will render my zeal and my arguments unnecessary, and even unseasonable.

CXL. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Peterhead, 10th July, 1788.

I AM much obliged to you for the quotation from Mrs. Piozzi's letters, and to that lady for speaking of me with so much kindness.* I was introduced to her and Mr Thrale by Dr. Johnson, and received many and great civilities from both. Mr. Thrale was a most respectable character; intelligent, modest, communicative, and friendly: and I greatly admired his wife for her vivacity, learning, affability, and beauty: I thought her, indeed, one of the most agreeable women I ever saw; and could not have imagined her capable of acting so unwise a part as she afterwards did.

What she says of Goldsmith is perfectly true. He was a poor fretful creature, eaten up with affec-

* The paragraph in question was as follows: "Dr. Beattie is as charming as ever. Every body rejoices that the doctor will get his pension. Every one loves him but Goldsmith, who says he cannot bear the sight of so much applause as we all bestow upon him. Did he not tell us so himself, who would believe he was so exceedingly ill-natured?"

tation and envy. He was the only person I ever knew who acknowledged himself to be envious. In Johnson's presence he was quiet enough; but in his absence expressed great uneasiness in hearing him praised. He envied even the dead; he could not bear that Shakspeare should be so much admired as he is. There might, however, be something like magnanimity in envying Shakspeare and Dr. Johnson; as in Julius Cæsar's weeping to think, that at an age at which he had done so little, Alexander should have done so much. But surely Goldsmith had no occasion to envy me; which, however, he certainly did, for he owned it (though, when we met, he was always very civil;) and I received undoubted information, that he seldom missed an opportunity of speaking ill of me behind my back. Goldsmith's common conversation was a strange mixture of absurdity and silliness; of silliness so great, as to make me sometimes think that he affected it. Yet he was a genius of no mean rank: somebody, who knew him well, called him *an inspired idiot*. His ballad of "Edwin and Angelina" is exceedingly beautiful, and well conducted; and in his two other poems, though there be great inequalities, there is pathos, energy, and even sublimity.

CXLI. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 8th August, 1788.

It delights me to hear that lord Huntly is to go to Oxford or Cambridge. An English university is the best place on earth for study; and, what is of still greater consequence, especially to a person

of high rank, it supplies the best opportunities of contracting those early connexions of friendship, which one remembers with exquisite pleasure to the end of life; and which often contribute, more than any thing else, to a great man's influence and popularity. Mr. Pitt, great as he is by hereditary right, and greater still by his own genius and virtue, would, I am persuaded, readily acknowledge how much he owes to Cambridge. There he was from the first a general favourite; and there he found many valuable friends, who, I am told, still adhere to him with a fervency of zeal, in which it is difficult to say, whether admiration or fondness be the most powerful ingredient. Such attachments do honour to human nature, and are equally delightful and lasting. The duke will be at no loss to determine whether Oxford or Cambridge is to be honoured with lord Huntly's residence. It is natural for me to have a partiality to the former: but in most things they are, I believe, pretty equal. Oxford is a place of greater resort and more brilliancy; but the quiet of Cambridge is, perhaps, more salutary to the student. Each has produced such a number of great men, as no other seminary in the ancient or modern world can boast of. The duke of Gloucester's son, if I mistake not, is gone to Cambridge.

My son is greatly honoured by the notice you take of him, and desires to offer his humble service. His health is quite re-established, but he is too studious to be robust. He has gone pretty deep in the theory of music, and now begins to practise a little. The organ is his favourite instrument; and,

as he has something of a mechanical turn, and needs to be decoyed from his books sometimes, I have made him employ his leisure at Peterhead, in superintending the building of an organ, under the auspices of Dr. Laing. It is now almost finished, and can already, as Hamlet says,

——Discourse most eloquent music.

The workmanship is good, and the tones are very pleasing.

CXLII. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 20th November, 1788.

* * * THE late dreadful news from Windsor must have been most distressing to your grace.* Blessed be God, the danger seems now to be over; otherwise I should not be able to write on that, or any other subject. For these ten days past I have thought myself in a dark, confused, feverish dream, with nothing before me but danger and horror. The agitation and anxiety I have undergone, are, indeed, such as it is impossible to describe, and such as I shall not soon get the better of. But may God restore the health of the best of sovereigns, and the best of men! and it matters not what becomes of me. Your grace must have the most authentic intelligence, otherwise I would tell you of a letter which I had to-day from sir William Forbes, which mentions one received from the highest au-

* The king's illness.

thority, certifying, that his majesty is in a fair way of recovery; and that the slowness of the recovery is, in the opinion of the physicians, very much in his favour. Sir William Fordyce too, in a letter which arrived here yesterday, gives the same account, and says that the delirium is gone. I hope the king will soon have the exquisite satisfaction to know, from what his subjects have suffered on this occasion, that he is, as he deserves to be, the most beloved prince that ever sat on the British throne.

You desire to know my opinion of Mr. Gibbon. I can say very little about him; for such is the affectation of his style, that I could never get through the half of one of his volumes. If any body would translate him into good classical English, (such, I mean, as Addison, Swift, lord Lyttelton, &c. wrote,) I should read him with eagerness; for I know there must be much curious matter in his work. His cavils against religion, have, I think, been all confuted; he does not seem to understand that part of his subject: indeed, I have never yet met with a man, or with an author, who both understood Christianity, and disbelieved it. It is, I am told, the fashion to admire Gibbon's style: my opinion of it, however, is supported by great authorities, of whom I need only mention lord Mansfield, the present bishop of London, Mrs. Montagu, and major Mercer. In the bishop's last letter to me there is the following passage: "We have been much amused this summer with Keate's 'Account of the Pelew Islands:' and it is almost the only summer book we have had; for Gibbon's three bulky quartos

are fit only for the gloom and horror of wintry storms : his style is more obscure and affected than ever ; and his insults on Christianity not less offensive."

CXLIH. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 25th March, 1789.

* * * My friend Dr. Campbell's great work (a new Translation of the Gospels, with preliminary Dissertations, and Notes critical and explanatory, in two volumes 4to.) is published at last. I carefully read the whole in manuscript, and wrote many a sheet of remarks and criticisms upon it ; and have no scruple to say, that it is one of the most important publications in theology, if not *the most important*, that has appeared in my time. It will give the public, at least the rational part of the public, a very high idea of the learning, acuteness, industry, candour, and piety of the author, who is my next neighbour, and with whom I have lived in the same society, upon the most intimate terms, for almost thirty years. It is about forty years since he engaged in this important work ; and yet I am afraid he will not get so much by it as Mr. Sheridan did by the comedy of the "*Duenna*."

CXLIV. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 25th May, 1789.

I CONGRATULATE you, madam, on the late proceedings of the commons in behalf of humanity and justice. The account of Mr. Wilberforce's speech that appeared in the papers is no doubt very imperfect; but it does him infinite honour, and I have read it once and again with great delight. It confirms a number of facts which I find in my papers on negro slavery, but of which I had of late become somewhat distrustful, having forgotten the authorities on which I had recorded them. The truth is, I have been collecting materials on that subject for upwards of twenty-five years; and, as far as my poor voice could be heard, have laboured, not altogether unsuccessfully, in pleading the cause of the poor Africans. This, at least, I can say with truth; that many of my pupils have gone to the West Indies, and, I trust, have carried my principles along with them, and exemplified those principles in their conduct to their unfortunate brethren. A good deal of my information, with respect to the negroes, I received from a most worthy old gentleman, a particular friend of mine, who had been long in one of our West India islands; and having acquired a competent fortune, returned to his own country, and devoted the last thirty years of a long life to philosophy and literature. He was one of the most learned men I have ever met with, a sincere Christian, and one who held all injustice, op-

pression, and every sort of inhumanity, in utter detestation.

Mrs. Arbuthnot is surprisingly well. She was at church yesterday. I need not tell you with what raptures of esteem and gratitude she speaks of you. I observe your benevolent intention of making an addition to your bounty to her; but will take it upon me to say, that it is quite unnecessary, as I know she considers herself as raised by your goodness to a state, not only of competence, but of opulence. She speaks of writing to her patroness very soon.

CXLV. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 31st July, 1789.

I AM very happy to hear, that the lord-primate of Ireland* has not forgotten me, and beg leave to offer my humble respects to his grace. The endowing of an university at Armagh, with a library and astronomical apparatus, is a work worthy of his benevolent, liberal, and magnificent mind. Though the college of Dublin be, as I have been told it is, abundantly flourishing, it is certainly not extensive enough for so populous a country as Ireland; one proof of which is the great number of Irish students that every year resort to Glasgow; a circumstance which gives no little uneasiness to the people of Dublin, if I may judge from some of their pamphlets; in which not Glasgow only, but the

* The most reverend Dr. Richard Robinson, lord archbishop of Armagh.

other Scottish universities, are attacked with rancorous asperity, and such a total disregard to truth as is hardly credible. I once had thoughts of answering one of the most malicious of those pamphlets, but changed my mind on considering that the abuse was anonymous, and, in respect of style and composition, so void of merit, that there was no chance of its gaining any attention. I sincerely wish success to the archbishop's noble foundation at Armagh. Every friend to humanity must regret that his health is so precarious. I made Mr. Creech very happy, by transmitting to him your and his grace's approbation of the "Comparative View of Edinburgh."

One knows not what to say of this wonderful revolution that is likely to take place in France. As I wish all mankind to be free and happy, I should rejoice in the downfall of French despotism, if I thought it would give happiness to the people; but the French seem to me to be better fitted for that sort of government which they want to throw off, than for any other that they could adopt in its stead. Till of late, the glory of the monarch was the supreme wish of a Frenchman's heart; and that principle, though in the day of trouble and tumult it may admit of a temporary suspension, will not soon or easily give way to the cooler and more philosophic notions that have long been familiar to the British politician. It is true, the political ideas of the French have been in a state of improvement ever since the time of Montesquieu, who first gave his countrymen a sketch of the constitution of England: *but political liberty is a thing, which, even*

among us who have long enjoyed it, is not universally understood, and which Harrington, Sydney, and Locke understood very imperfectly. I dare say, that the bulk of the French nation at this moment suppose, as the North-Americans seem to do, that liberty consists in the privilege of doing what they please, or, at least, of being subject to no laws but those of their own making; and yet it is certainly neither the one nor the other. The first would be anarchy, the worst sort of slavery; and the other is not compatible with any plan of policy that was ever yet devised by man. Political liberty I take to be, that state of society, in which men are so governed by equitable laws, and so tried by equitable judges, that no man can be hindered from doing what the law allows him to do, nor have reason to be afraid of any man so long as he does his duty. But I apprehend it will be long before a nation, emerging from despotism, and assuming a popular form of policy, can hit upon the proper way of establishing such a state of things; and till that be done, convulsions are to be expected, which will sometimes endanger liberty, and sometimes tend to the subversion of legal authority. If the revolution in France be made effectual, it will probably be beneficial to the poor negroes; for I am told that M. Neckar and the national assembly have explicitly declared themselves for the abolition of the slave trade.

CXLVI. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 3d August, 1790.

My son continues, as he has been for these four weeks past, without either gaining ground, or apparently losing any.* His debility is extreme; and his cough a little troublesome, but not very painful; and to me it does not seem to have that hollow sound which is generally heard in consumptive cases. He continues his milk diet; the greatest part of which is goats' milk.

I am well aware of the propriety of your advice, and will endeavour to profit by it. To torment ~~ourselves~~ with unavailing anxieties about possible, ~~or~~ even probable evils, is not only imprudent, but unlawful; for our religion expressly forbids it. But I have not now the command of my thoughts. Ever since the commencement of our vacation, I have been passing, without intermission, from one scene of perplexity and sorrow to another. But let me not trouble you with things of this nature. It would become me better to speak of the manifold blessings which Providence has conferred upon me, than of any trials which may have fallen to my lot. These will all terminate well if it is not my own fault; and even for these I ought to be thankful; for I can say, from the fullest conviction, that "it is good for me to have been afflicted."

I am glad that you approve of my slight annotations upon Addison. I have not yet got a sight of

* He had been suffering from illness for several months.

the new edition of his prose works like to see it, having almost forgotten of which I kept no copy. I am greatly obliged to Miss Bowdler for her favourable opinion, and am well pleased to find that she approves of the present revision of the English language. I begin to feel it impossible to check it; but an *attempt* I will make, if I had leisure, and a little more of a settled mind.

I have been reading, with all the powers of my bewildered mind is capable of, but

“Dissertations on the Prophecies” the simplicity of the style and manner is very beautiful of its author, whom I well know was the most saint-like Nathanael. The work is a very learned and pious work, and is read by every body: for though all are not equally satisfying, (a thing not uncommon in such a work) it contains many acute observations, which, though they sometimes overcome the obstinacy of the infidel, can confirm the faith of the Christian. It contains a very great variety of historical information, and throws a surprising light on many of the prophecies of Scripture.

CXLVII. TO THE DUCHESS OF ABERDEEN.

Aberdeen, 1st Decr.

KNOWING with what kindness and interest your grace takes an interest in every thing that concerns me and my little family,

to inform you that my son James is dead; that the last duties to him are now paid; and that I am endeavouring to return, with the little ability that is left me, and with entire submission to the will of Providence, to the ordinary business of life. I have lost one who was always a pleasing companion; but who, for the last five or six years, was one of the most entertaining and instructive companions that ever man was blessed with: for his mind comprehended almost every science; he was a most attentive observer of life and manners; a master of classical learning; and he possessed an exuberance of wit and humour, a force of understanding, and a correctness and delicacy of taste, beyond any other person of his age I have ever known.

He was taken ill in the night of the 30th of November, 1789; and from that time his decline commenced. It was long what physicians call a *nervous atrophy*; but towards the end of June, symptoms began to appear of the lungs being affected. Goats' milk, and afterwards asses' milk, were procured for him in abundance; and such exercise as he could bear he regularly took: these means lengthened his days, no doubt, and alleviated his sufferings, which, indeed, were not often severe: but, in spite of all that could be done, he grew weaker and weaker, and died the 19th of November, 1790, without complaint or pain, without even a groan or a sigh; retaining to the last moment the use of his rational faculties: indeed, from first to last, not one delirious word ever escaped him. He lived twenty-two years and thirteen days. Many weeks before it came, he sa

time before I shall be able
far as to revise them.

I have the satisfaction to
has been done for him that
every thing according to
that Scotland could afford
months I kept in my family
who was constantly at hand
ning to the end of my son's
ways by him, or within cal-
stances, your grace will re-
rive no little satisfaction:
arises from reflecting upon
life, which was one uni-
piety, benevolence, filial af-
every virtue which it was in
I shall not, with respect to
speech which has become to

CXLVIII. TO THE REV. DR. LAING.

Aberdeen, 14th December, 1790.

I KNOW you are anxious to hear from me; and I wish, as I have much to say, to write you a long letter; but that is not in my power at present. There is only one subject on which I can think;* and my nerves are so shattered, and my mind feels (if I may so express myself) so sore, that I can hardly attend to any thing. You may be assured, that to the will of God I am perfectly resigned: and, in the late dispensation of his Providence, I see innumerable instances of the divine benignity, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful.

Mr. **** would tell you many particulars, which I need not recapitulate. Since the last duty was paid, I have thrice a-day attended my business in the college; the doing of which is, in the present circumstances, painful and laborious, but, perhaps, salutary. I sleep irregularly; the pain in my side is frequently troublesome; and the dizziness in my head is so great, as would alarm and astonish me, if I had not been used to it: but, upon the whole, I am as well as I had any reason to expect. I have had very kind letters of condolence from all my friends.

I know not whether you will, as a physician, approve of what I am doing at my hours of leisure—writing an account of the life, character, education,

* The recent loss of his eldest son, who died on the 19th of November preceding.

and literary proficiency, of our departed friend. I sometimes think it gives relief to my mind, and soothes it. At any rate, it is better than running into company, in order to drive him, as much as possible, out of my remembrance. With all the tenderness that writing on such a subject necessarily occasions, it yields also many consolations so pleasing, that for the world I would not part with them. I know not what I shall do with this narrative when it is finished: I have thoughts of printing a few copies of it, and sending them to my particular friends.

I have ordered a marble slab to be erected over his grave; with an inscription, of which I enclose a copy. In some things I think it falls below the truth; but rises into nothing above it, so far as I can judge. Monumental inscriptions I consider as belonging, not to poetry, but to history; the writers of them should give the truth, if possible the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I wrote this inscription in Latin; thinking that language more suitable than English, to his character as a scholar and philosopher. The papers he has left are many; but few of them finished. In little notes and memorandums, some Latin and some English, I find strokes of character greatly to his honour, forms of devotion, pious resolutions, hints for writing essays, &c.

CXLIX. TO THE REV. DR. LAING.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1791.

My heart is likely to receive very soon another deep wound. Our principal's life is in the most extreme danger. The disorder began with what was supposed a cold only, but has become a most violent asthma with fever, and in the night time such extreme distress, that Mrs. Campbell told me to-day, in an agony of grief, that it would be better for him to be at rest. This morning he expressed great anxiety to see me. I went immediately, and was a quarter of an hour alone with him. He told me he was dying, with other matters which I cannot mention; and gave me directions with respect to some things in which he is interested. I endeavoured to raise his spirits; and when I left him, he was better than when I went in. But Dr. ***** has little or no hopes of him: Mrs. Campbell has none. I thought his pulse not bad; but he told me he had always a very slow pulse. A person so amiable and so valuable, and who has been my intimate and affectionate friend for thirty years, it is not a slight matter to lose: but I fear I must lose him. His death will be an unspeakable loss to our society.

The monument, with the inscription, is now erected in the church-yard; so that all that matter is over. I often dream of the grave that is under it. I saw with some satisfaction, on a late occasion, that *it is very deep, and capable of holding my coffin*

laid on that which is already in it. I hope my friends will allow my body to sleep there.

CL. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1791.

I HAVE too often sent you letters that must have given you pain : I am happy in having it in my power to send one that will give you pleasure. I beg you will let Mr. Baron Gordon and Mr. Arbuthnot know the contents of it.

Our principal Campbell's disorder has taken an unexpected and very favourable turn. I sat with him half an hour to-day, and found, to my inexpressible satisfaction, that his fever is gone, that he has little to complain of, and that he now begins to have hopes of recovery. I have seldom seen him more cheerful ; and he would willingly have talked much more than I would allow him to do. Few things have ever happened to me in life that gave me more satisfaction than the prospect of his recovery : it is a blessing to the public, of inestimable benefit to Marischal college, and to me a very singular mercy. In consequence of it, I feel my heart more disengaged and light than it has been these many long months. May God confirm his recovery, and preserve him ! The physicians also entertain sanguine hopes.

You, my dear sir, and I, have seen several instances of the power of Christianity in triumphing over death. I saw many instances of it on a late occasion, that nearly affected me. I must give you a little anecdote, which Mrs. Campbell told me to-

day. At a time when Dr. Campbell seemed to be just expiring, and had told his wife and niece that it was so, a cordial happened unexpectedly to give him relief. As soon as he was able to speak, he said, that he wondered to see their countenances so melancholy, and covered with tears, in the apprehension of his departure. At that instant, said he, I felt my mind in such a state, in the thoughts of my immediate dissolution, that I can express my feelings in no other way, than by saying, that I was *in a rapture*. The feelings of such a mind as Dr. Campbell's, in such an awful moment, when he certainly retained the full use of all his faculties, deserve to be attended to. When will an infidel die such a death?

I have a thousand things to say; but, after what I said last, every thing else is impertinent. Adieu! May God bless lady Forbes and your family.

CLI. TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 7th March, 1791.

AFTER the patient hearing which your grace has done me the honour to grant to several of my opinions, I presume you will not be at a loss to guess what I think of Mr. Burke's book on the French revolution. I wished the French nation very well; I wished their government reformed, and their religion; I wished both to be according to the British model: and I know not what better things I could have wished them. But (with the skill and temper of that surgeon, who, in order to alleviate

the toothache, should knock all his patient's teeth down his throat) they, instead of reforming popery, seem to have resolved upon the abolition of Christianity; instead of amending their government, they have destroyed it; and instead of advising their king to consult his own and his people's dignity, by making law the rule of his conduct, they have used him much more cruelly than our Charles I. was used; they have made him a prisoner and a slave.

They will have a democracy indeed, and no aristocracy! They know not the meaning of the words. A democracy, in which *all* men are supposed to be perfectly equal, never yet took place in any nation, and never can, so long as the distinctions are acknowledged of rich and poor, master and servant, parent and child, old and young, strong and weak, active and indolent, wise and unwise. They will have a republic; and of this word too they misunderstand the meaning; they confound republic with levelling: and a levelling spirit, generally diffused, would soon overturn the best republican fabric that ever was reared. They must also have a monarchy (or at least a monarch) without nobility; not knowing, that without nobility a free monarchy can no more subsist than the roof of a house can rise to and retain its proper elevation, while the walls are but half built; not knowing, that where there are only two orders of people in a nation, and those the regal and the plebeian, there must be perpetual dissension between them, either till the king get the better of the people, which will make him (if he pleases) despotical, or till the people get the

better of the king, which, where all subordination is abolished, must introduce anarchy. It must be the interest of the nobility to keep the people in good humour, these being always a most formidable body; and it is equally the interest of the nobles to support the throne; for if it fall they are crushed in its ruins. The same house of commons that murdered Charles I. voted the house of lords to be useless: and when the rabble of France had imprisoned and enslaved their king, they immediately set about annihilating their nobles. Such things have happened; and such things must always happen in like circumstances. These principles I have been pondering in my mind these thirty years; and the more I learn of history, of law, and of human nature, the more I become satisfied of their truth. But there seems to be just now in France such a total ignorance of human nature and of good learning, as is perfectly astonishing; there is no consideration, no simplicity, no dignity; all froth, phrensy, and foppery.

In Mr. Burke's book are many expressions, that might perhaps, with equal propriety, have been more warm: but against these it is not easy to guard, even a powerful eloquence is animated by an ardent mind. There are also, no doubt, some things that might have been omitted without loss: and the arrangement of the subject might perhaps have been more convenient for ordinary readers. But the spirit and principles of the work, I, as a lover of liberty and of the constitution of my country, highly approve; and within my very narrow sphere of influence I shall not fail to recommend it.

metans, Pagans, and at
leration.

I once intended to hav
thing on the subject o
nearly according to his
been a little more at eas
I believe I should have d
that Mr. Burke had the
attempt of mine would b
pertinent. He has done
justice than it was in m

At a time when you
ters of importance to a
troubled you with so lo
desired me to give my o
But this led me into
though your judgment
goodness will pardon.

ALL THIS

here just now, though she commonly resides at Bath. She is to draw up a paper of directions for me. I know not whether you have seen her. She is one of the most agreeable women I know: to her genius and learning you are no stranger.

Fulham Palace is a noble and venerable pile, and so large that I have not yet learned to find my way in it. The grounds belonging to it, which are perfectly level, and comprehend twenty or thirty acres, are of a circular form nearly, and surrounded by a moat supplied with water from the Thames; and round the whole circumference, on the inside of the moat, there is a fine gravel walk, shaded with four or five rows of the most majestic oaks, elms, &c. that are any where to be seen. Of the buildings, which form two square courts, (besides offices,) some are ancient, and some comparatively modern. Many of the apartments are magnificent, particularly the dining-room (which was the work of bishop Sherlock) and the library. There is also a very elegant chapel, in which the whole family meet to prayers at half past nine in the morning, and where the bishop preached to us on Sunday evening, from the second article of the creed. I never heard, even from him, a finer sermon; and Montagu, who is a sort of critic in sermons, was in utter astonishment at the energy and elegance of his pronunciation.

I read yesterday the debate on the slave-trade, which fills a two-shilling pamphlet. The speeches of Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt, Mr. W. Smith, and Mr. Fox are most excellent, and absolutely unanswerable. The friends to the abolition are very

I am very happy in your
approbation of my book
Forbes's, and our princip
script. General approbat
plainness of the style will
ters, be termed vulgarity
of the whole will satisfy c
clans, that the author mu
cial, and a dealer in con
and the deference that is
of Christianity will, by s
be considered as a proof
You observe, very justly,
lity has not often, at least
treated, as to show its
but I have always consid
cal science; and, in even
I do not see the use of t
be applied to no practical
that they exercise the hu
lity men for being casu

who have acquired a taste for them, and have nothing else to do.

CLIV. TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 14th March, 1796.

OUR plans relating to Montagu * are all at an end. I am sorry to give you the pain of being informed that he died this morning at five. His disorder was a fever, from which at first we had little apprehension; but it cut him off in five days. He himself thought from the beginning that it would be fatal; and, before the delirium came on, spoke with great composure and Christian piety of his approaching dissolution: he even gave some directions about his funeral. The delirium was very violent, and continued till within a few minutes of his death, when he was heard to repeat in a whisper the Lord's prayer, and began an unfinished sentence, of which nothing could be heard but the words *in-corruptible glory*. Pious sentiments prevailed in his mind through life, and did not leave him till death; nor then I trust did they leave him. Notwithstanding the extreme violence of his fever, he seemed to suffer little pain either in body or in mind, and as his end drew near, a smile settled upon his countenance. I need not tell you that he had every attention that skilful and affectionate physicians could bestow. I give you the trouble to notify this event to Mr. Arbuthnot. I would have written to him, but have many things to mind, and

* His only surviving child.

but indifferent health. However, I heartily acquiesce in the dispensations of Providence, which are all good and wise. God bless you and your family.

He will be much regretted; for wherever he went he was a very popular character.

CLV. TO THE REV. DR. LAING.

Aberdeen, 10th April, 1796.

I WISHED to answer your kind letter as soon as I received it, or as soon after as possible; but the very interesting and painful suspense I was kept in by Dr. Campbell's illness, disqualified me for writing, and every thing else. His illness was so violent, that, considering his age and enfeebled state, and some other disorders which I knew he was afflicted with, I did not at first imagine that he could live two days. To the surprise of every body, however, he held out almost a week, though unable to speak, and for a great part of the time delirious. His death at last was easy, and he died as he had lived, a sincere Christian: we yesterday paid our last duties to his remains. He and I were intimate friends for about thirty-eight years, without any interval of coldness or dissatisfaction. His instructive and cheerful conversation was one of the greatest blessings of my life, and I shall cherish the remembrance of it, with gratitude to the Giver of all good, as long as I live.

His death was looked for, and by himself much desired. Montagu's came upon me in a different manner. His delirium, which was extremely violent

ended in a state of such apparent tranquillity, that I was congratulating myself on the danger being over, at the very time when Dr. * * * * * came, and told me, in his own name, and in that of the other two physicians that attended Montagu, that he could not live many hours: this was at eleven at night, and he died at five next morning. I hope I am resigned, as my duty requires, and as I wish to be; but I have passed many a bitter hour, though on those occasions nobody sees me. I fear my reason is a little disordered, for I have sometimes thought of late, especially in a morning, that Montagu is not dead, though I seem to have a remembrance of a dream that he is. This you will say, what I myself believe, is a symptom not uncommon in cases similar to mine, and that I ought, by all means, to go from home as soon as I can. I will do so when the weather becomes tolerable. Inclination would draw me to Peterhead; but the intolerable road forbids it, and I believe I must go southward, where the roads are very good; at least, I hear so.

Being now childless, by the will of Providence, (in which I trust I acquiesce) I have made a new settlement in my small affairs; the only particular of which that needs to be mentioned at present is, that the organ, built by my eldest son and you, is now yours.

I am much obliged to the kind friends who sympathise with me. Montagu was indeed very popular wherever he went. His death was calm, resigned, and unaffectedly pious; he thought himself dying from the first attack of his illness. "I could

I HAVE been these many da
to you and Mr. Arbuthnot, to
very kind and sympathetic
things have come in my way
not pretend a hurry of busi
knows I am not capable of
hangs upon me, and disables
thoughts so strange sometin
make me "fear that I am no
my perfect mind." But I th
resigned to the divine will;
childless, I have friends who
other virtues, I find great c
The physicians not only a
indeed command me, to go
without farther delay: an
out for Edinburgh



BEATTIE'S LETTERS.

195

of kindness and sympathy, and by consequence of comfort, to my bewildered mind. I trust that in resignation to the will of the supremely wise and good Disposer of all events, I am not deficient; but my frailties are many, and I cannot yet counteract the pressure that bears so hard upon me. Time and recollection will, I hope, give some strength to my faculties, and restore to me the power of commanding my thoughts. The physicians, who see how it is with me, not only advise, but command me to go from home, without farther delay: and I intend to begin to-morrow, to try at least what I can do in the way of travelling. My first course will be towards Edinburgh, where I shall stay two or three weeks; and if I find I am able, I shall probably after that go a little way into England: but whether I shall find it adviseable to proceed as far as London, I cannot as yet determine.

My son Montagu sleeps in his brother's grave; the depth of which allows sufficient room for both. The inscription I have enlarged a little, and enclose a copy: its only merit is its simplicity and truth.

MONTAGU. BEATTIE.

Jacobi. Hay. Beattie. Frater.

Ejusque. Virtutum. et. Studiorum.

Æmulus.

Sepulchrique. Consors.

Variarum. Peritus. Artium.

Pingendi. imprimis.

Natus, Octavo. Julii. MDCCLXXVIII.

Multum. Defletus. Obiit.

Decimo. Quarto. Martii. MDCCXCVI.

CLVIII. TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 9th February, 1797.

IF I could have said any thing that would mitigate your grief for the loss of a most deserving son,* your own heart will testify for me that I would not have been so long silent. But I have had too much experience not to know, that the only sources of comfort, in a case of this kind, are submission to the divine will, aided by the slow and silent operation of time. God grant that these may be effectual for the alleviation of your sorrow! Think on the many other blessings you enjoy; and think that the most enviable of all deaths is that which we now bewail, an honourable death in the service of our country. I beg leave to offer my best wishes and sympathy to Mrs. Arbuthnot and the rest of your family; and shall be happy to hear that you and they are as well as it is reasonable to expect.

I sometimes make an excursion to major Mercer's, which is the only sort of visit I ever attempt; and he and I are, I hope, beneficial to each other; though his affliction is, I fear, in some respects, heavier than either yours or mine. Alas! how many things occur in this world, which are worse than death!

* A very deserving officer of artillery, who died at this time in the West Indies.

CLIX. TO THE REV. DR. LAING.

Aberdeen, 7th March, 1799.

I HAVE just now heard, by the post of this day, a piece of news that affects me very much, the death of my excellent friend Mrs. Montagu. Her age was not less than fourscore, so that on this point she is not to be regretted. But many people depended on her; and to me, on all occasions, ever since 1771, when I first became acquainted with her, she has been a faithful and affectionate friend, especially in seasons of distress and difficulty. You will not wonder, then, that her death afflicts me. For some years past a failure in her eyes had made writing very painful to her; but for not less than twenty years she was my punctual correspondent. She was greatly attached to Montagu, who received his name from her, and not less interested in my other son, and in every thing that related to my family. I need not tell you what an excellent writer she was: you must have seen her book on Shakspeare, as compared with the Greek and French dramatic writers. I have known several ladies eminent in literature, but she excelled them all; and in conversation she had more *wit* than any other person, male or female, whom I have ever known. These, however, were her slighter accomplishments: what was infinitely more to her honour, she was a sincere Christian, both in faith and in practice, and took every proper opportunity to show it; so that by her example and influence she *did much good*. I knew her husband, who died

in extreme old age, in the year 1775, and by her desire had conferences with him on the subject of Christianity; but, to her great concern, he set too much value on mathematical evidence, and piqued himself too much on his knowledge in that science. He took it into his head, too, that I was a mathematician, though I was at a great deal of pains to convince him of the contrary.*

* Not long after this the sufferings of Dr. Beattie drew towards a close. In the beginning of April, 1799, he had a stroke of the palsy, which so affected his speech, that he could not make himself understood; and he even forgot some of the most important words in every sentence. At different periods after this, he had several returns of the same afflicting malady; and at length expired, without pain or any apparent struggle, on the 18th of August, 1803, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

INDEX.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Page</i>
LXVII. To Sir William Forbes	3
LXVIII. To the Rev. Dr. Porteus	5
LXIX. To Mrs. Montagu	<i>ib.</i>
LXX. To the same	9
LXXI. To the Hon. Mr. Baron Gordon	13
LXXII. To the Rev. Mr. Cameron	15
LXXIII. To Sir William Forbes	16
LXXIV. To the Rev. Mr. Cameron	17
LXXV. To Sir William Forbes	19
LXXVI. To the same	21
LXXVII. To the same	25
LXXVIII. To Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester	26
LXXIX. To Sylvester Douglas, esq.	28
LXXX. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.	31
LXXXI. To Sir William Forbes	35
LXXXII. To the Duchess of Gordon	37
LXXXIII. To Sir William Forbes	41
LXXXIV. To the Rev. Dr. Laing	45
LXXXV. To Mrs. Montagu	47
LXXXVI. To the Duchess of Gordon	<i>ib.</i>
LXXXVII. To Sir William Forbes	48
LXXXVIII. To the Duchess of Gordon	51
LXXXIX. To Sir William Forbes	52
XC. To the same	54
XCI. To the Duchess of Gordon	55
XCII. To Mrs. Montagu	57
XCIII. To the Duchess of Gordon	60
XCIV. To Major Mercer	63
XCV. To Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester	64
XCVI. To Sir William Forbes	67
XCVII. To the Duchess of Gordon	70

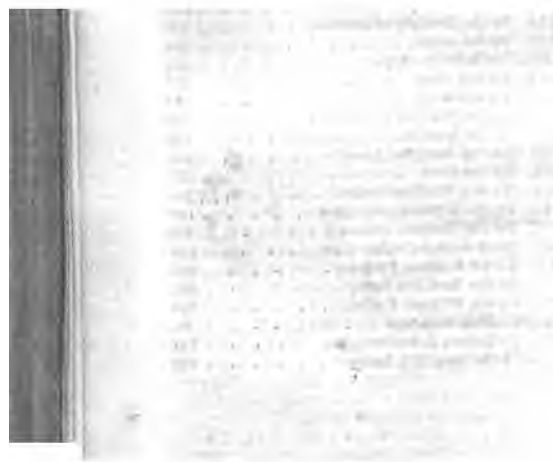
<i>No.</i>	<i>Page</i>
XCVIII. To Sir William Forbes	73
XCIX. To the Duchess of Gordon	75
C. To the Rev. Dr. Laing	76
CI. To the Duchess of Gordon	78
CII. To Sir William Forbes	82
CIII. To the Duchess of Gordon	84
CIV. To Sir William Forbes	86
CV. To the Duchess of Gordon	88
CVI. To Sir William Forbes	90
CVII. To the Duchess of Gordon	91
CVIII. To the Rev. Mr. Williamson	92
CIX. To the Duchess of Gordon	93
CX. To Sir William Forbes	97
CXI. To Mrs. Montagu	98
CXII. To Sir William Forbes	102
CXIII. To the Duchess of Gordon	104
CXIV. To the Hon. Mr. Baron Gordon	105
CXV. To the Bishop of Worcester	106
CXVI. To Mrs. Montagu	108
CXVII. To Miss Valentine	110
CXVIII. To Sir William Forbes	112
CXIX. To the same	113
CXX. To the same	115
CXXI. To Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester	120
CXXII. To Mrs. Montagu	122
CXXIII. To the same	126
CXXIV. To Sir William Forbes	128
CXXV. To the Rev. Dr. Laing	130
CXXVI. To Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester	132
CXXVII. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.	134
CXXVIII. To the Bishop of Worcester	138
CXXIX. To Sir William Forbes	139
CXXX. To the same	140
CXXXI. To the same	143
CXXXII. To the Hon. Mr. Baron Gordon	145
CXXXIII. To Miss Valentine	150
CXXXIV. To Sir William Forbes	152
CXXXV. To Mrs. Montagu	153

INDEX.

201

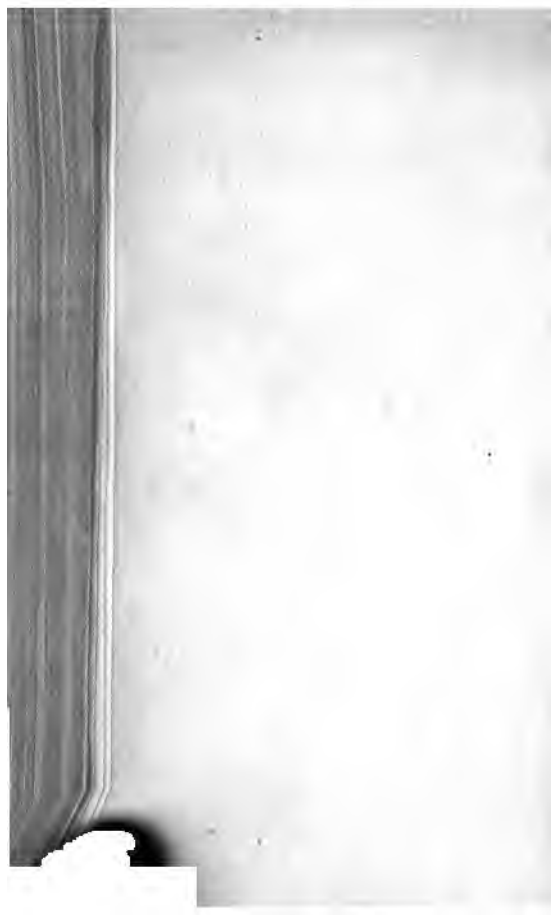
<i>No.</i>	<i>Page</i>
CXXXVI. To Sir William Forbes	156
CXXXVII. To the same	159
CXXXVIII. To the same	163
CXXXIX. To Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London	165
CXL. To Sir William Forbes	167
CXLI. To the Duchess of Gordon	168
CXLII. To the same	170
CXLIII. To Mrs. Montagu	172
CXLIV. To the same	173
CXLV. To the same	174
CXLVI. To Sir William Forbes	177
CXLVII. To the Duchess of Gordon	178
CXLVIII. To the Rev. Dr. Laing	181
CXLIX. To the same	183
CL. To Sir William Forbes	184
CLI. To the Duchess of Gordon	185
CLII. To Sir William Forbes	188
CLIII. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.	190
CLIV. To Sir William Forbes	191
CLV. To the Rev. Dr. Laing	192
CLVI. To Sir William Forbes	194
CLVII. To Mrs. Montagu	ib.
CLVIII. To Robert Arbuthnot, esq.	196
CLIX. To the Rev. Dr. Laing	197

THE END.











JAN 2 1961

